



HISTORY  
OF THE  
AZORES

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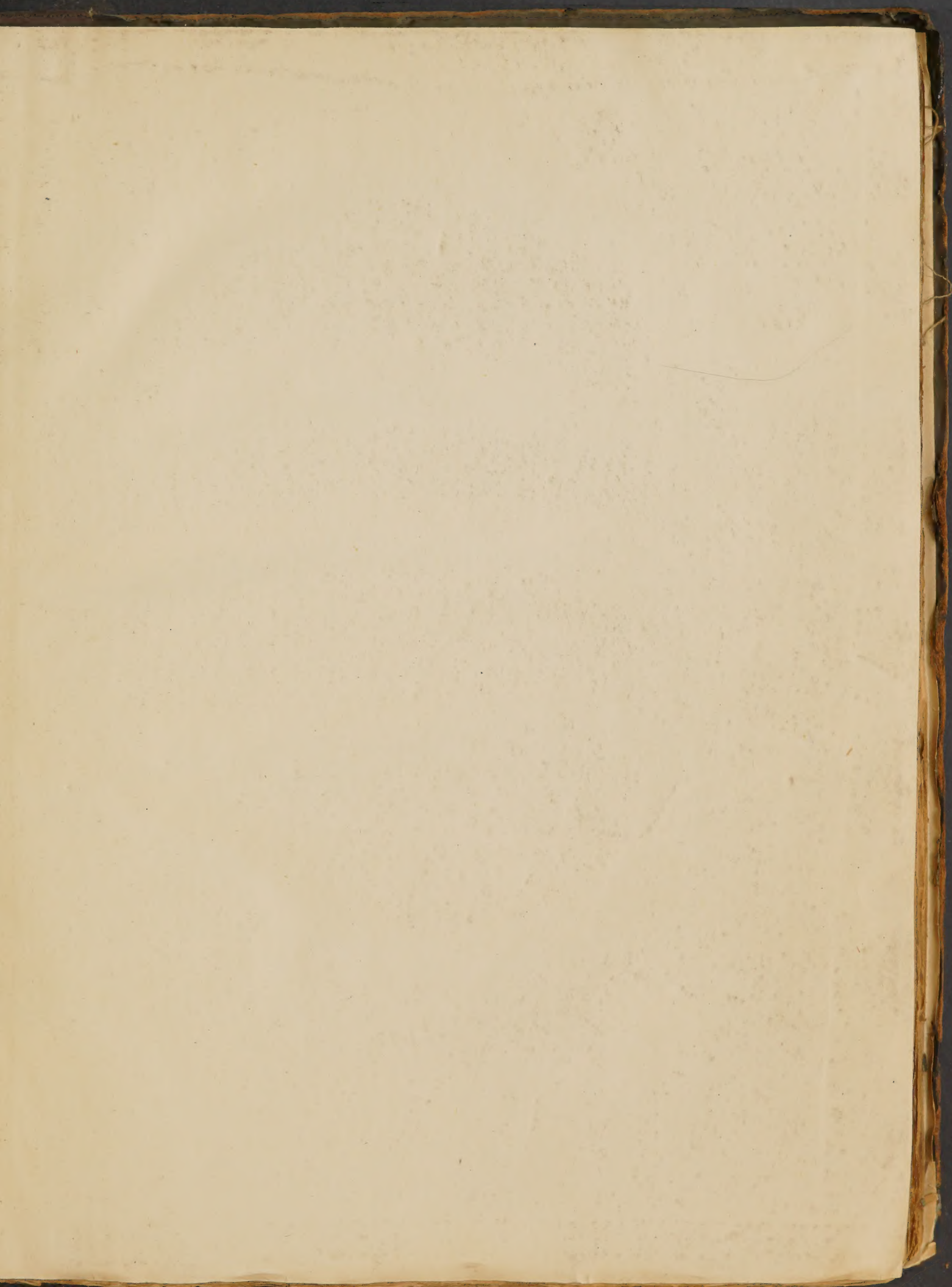




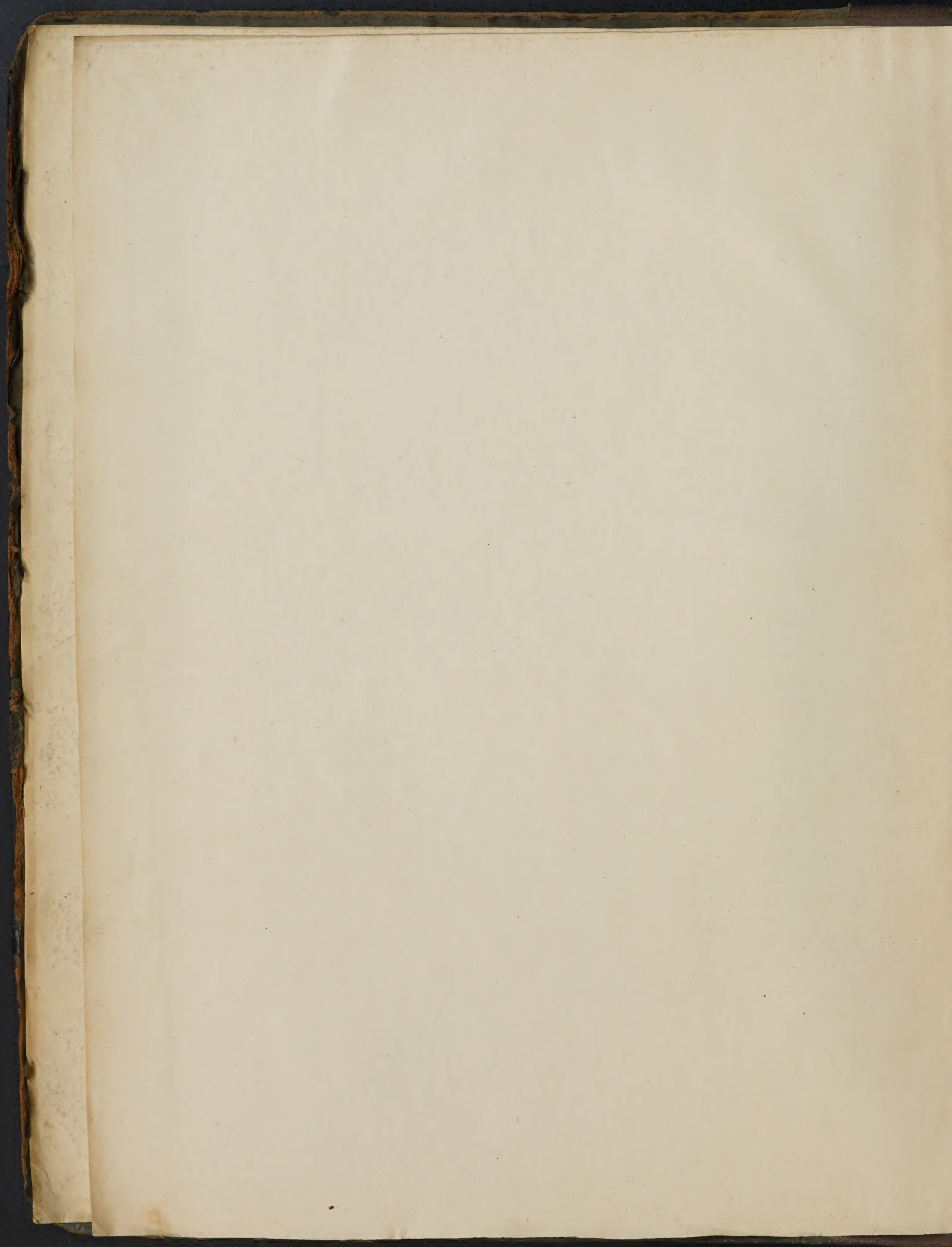
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To face the Title.



Cooper's Sculpt.

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HISTORY  
OF THE  
**A Z O R E S,**  
OR  
**W E S T E R N I S L A N D S;**  
CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
GOVERNMENT, LAWS, AND RELIGION,  
THE  
*Manners, Ceremonies, and Character of the Inhabitants:*  
AND DEMONSTRATING  
THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE VALUABLE ISLANDS  
TO THE  
**BRITISH EMPIRE.**

*J. Ashe*

ILLUSTRATED BY MAPS AND OTHER ENGRAVINGS.

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AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1813.



90833



TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
FRANCIS, EARL OF MOIRA,

*&c. &c.*

MY LORD,

FROM want of other employment in these Islands, I have bestowed much of my time in exploring their condition and capacities, and in conveying the information thus obtained to a respected Friend in my native Country. The result of my inquiries, in its present form, I respectfully presume to recommend to your Lordship's notice, from the conviction that, being equally zealous for your Prince and your Country, you will receive with complacency a work whose object is to advance the interests of both.

Your Lordship will find that it comprizes a description of facts as interesting as extraordinary ;



DEDICATION.

accompanied with observations upon many local circumstances, not generally known, because not hitherto described. Happy should I be, were it more worthy of your Lordship's acceptance.

Having the honour to be, My Lord, with the highest considerations of respect,

Your Lordship's

Most truly humble,

And very obedient servant.

T. A.—*Captain Light Dragoons.*



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# P R E F A C E.

*(BY THE EDITOR.)*

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ON the introduction of a work of this nature to the public, it seems requisite to give some previous explanation of the design ; to point out the general and particular uses for which it is intended ; and the advantages that may arise from reading it with attention.

The plan of the undertaking is more comprehensive than that of voyages and travels in general : that is to say, of those which describe similar countries, without assisting the reader in conjecture, or which do not philosophize upon facts. We may presume to add, that herein the author has attempted to combine science with description, and instruction with amusement.

Travel has, in our days, become a part of education ;

and for this reason:—it experimentally instructs those who have gained as much previous knowledge, as they were capable of acquiring from books, as well as those who do not possess this happy and peculiar privilege. It is equally advantageous to those who have it in their power to indulge the pleasing emanations of mind, and who can thus add the experience of the world to the theory of the schools, as it is to those, the far greater part of mankind, to whom the enjoyments of a cultivated intellect are unknown.

In order to gratify each of these classes, the design of the author appears to have been not only to convey all the information he possibly could upon the subject, but also to convey it in the most plain and simple manner. He, firstly, inquires what are the natural commodities of the islands; the value and demand for such commodities in other parts, the manner in and the price at which they are disposed of by the natives: Secondly, he enumerates their manufactures, observing whether they are employed in commodities of their own growth, or in such as are imported from abroad; strictly examining into the number of hands employed, the nature of their employments, and the advantages which their industry affords either to themselves, in particular, or to the Portuguese, as a nation, in general. Thirdly, he inquires



into the state of the ports and harbours ; the convenience and inconvenience of each, in point of situation. This leads him to consider fourthly, the number of seamen employed therein, on which he appears to think the wealth and power of a maritime people, in a great measure, depend. The last point he considers is, the propriety of viewing the Azores as British colonies and plantations ; with respect to which, he teaches us to examine how far they may contribute to the advantage of Britain ; the true use of colonies being their assistance in the support of that government, by which they are protected, or the country from which they are derived. Thus much for the commercial part of this work.

He next proceeds to show the original foundation of the government, and the subsequent changes that have happened in it ; these are the subject of his general history.

His descriptions of the properties and phenomena of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and boiling springs, which follow, will, we trust, be deemed original and interesting.

But, it is in a commercial, or rather in a political, point of view that the author appears anxious to exhibit

the Azores to the British nation; although he has diversified the subject with interesting anecdote and picturesque description: and he has been induced the more particularly to do so, because no traveller, no author, has heretofore described the Azores: or, to his knowledge, treated upon the same subject.

The idea of placing the Western Islands under the immediate protection of Britain is far from being a mere empty scheme, or visionary project. Portugal owes this country vast sums of money, and may be happy to dissolve the debt by a transfer of the sovereignty. This would at once change the general face of the Azores, and open such new branches of trade to England, as would amply compensate for the loans made in support of the Braganza cause. The measure would not only enhance the glory of the British name, but contribute to the common benefit of all the islands. It would afford to the English that satisfaction which is truly noble, from imparting the means of dispelling superstition, enthusiasm, poverty, and ignorance; of admitting the inhabitants of the Azores to those rights of which they are at present dispossessed, or which have been withheld, from their first establishment to the present time. It would raise nearly half a million of people from a state of comparative slavery, to a state of independence, to



industry, and political strength. We should then see the Azores, which now appear, for the most part, as so many deserts, smile again in their native beauty. It would be easy to expatiate much further on so agreeable a subject, but what is already advanced may be sufficient to awaken the consideration of the intelligent.

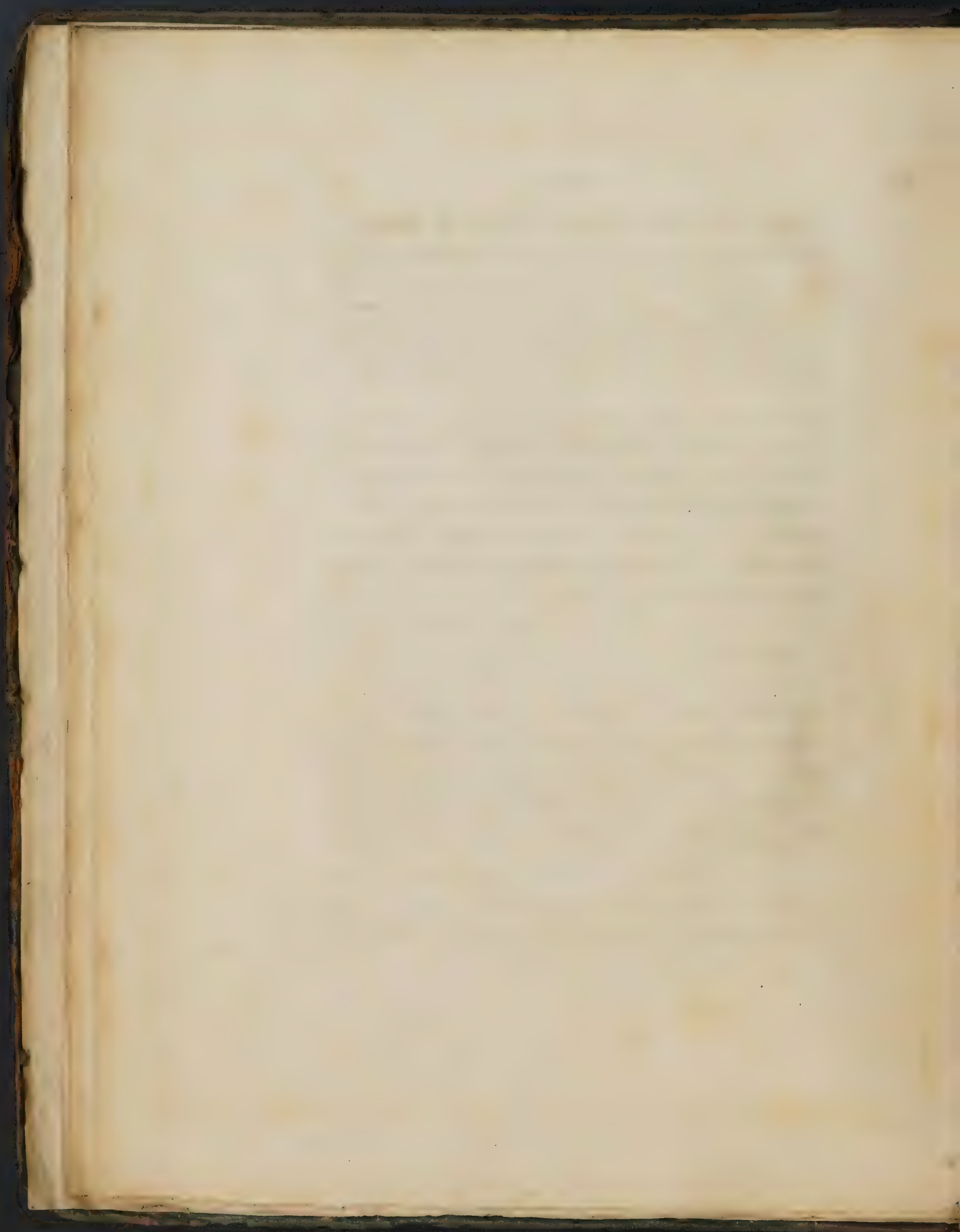
We conclude these remarks with the clear conviction that the measure proposed by the author should be attempted ; and are equally persuaded, if the change does not very speedily take place, it will infallibly take place in a time not far distant ; when the beams of liberty and justice, of liberality and happiness, radiating from Britain, shall illuminate these islands.

JOS. T. HAYDN.

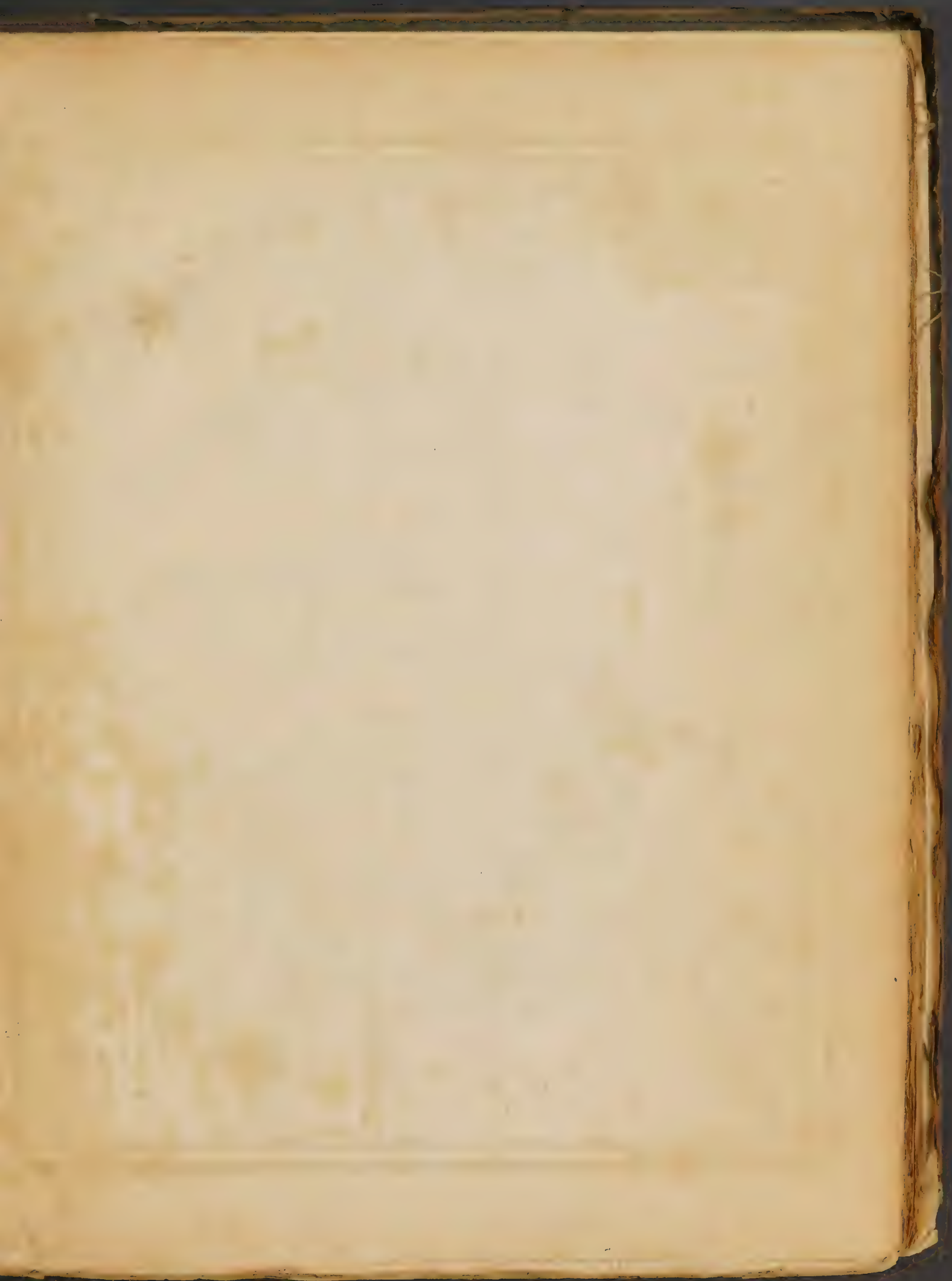
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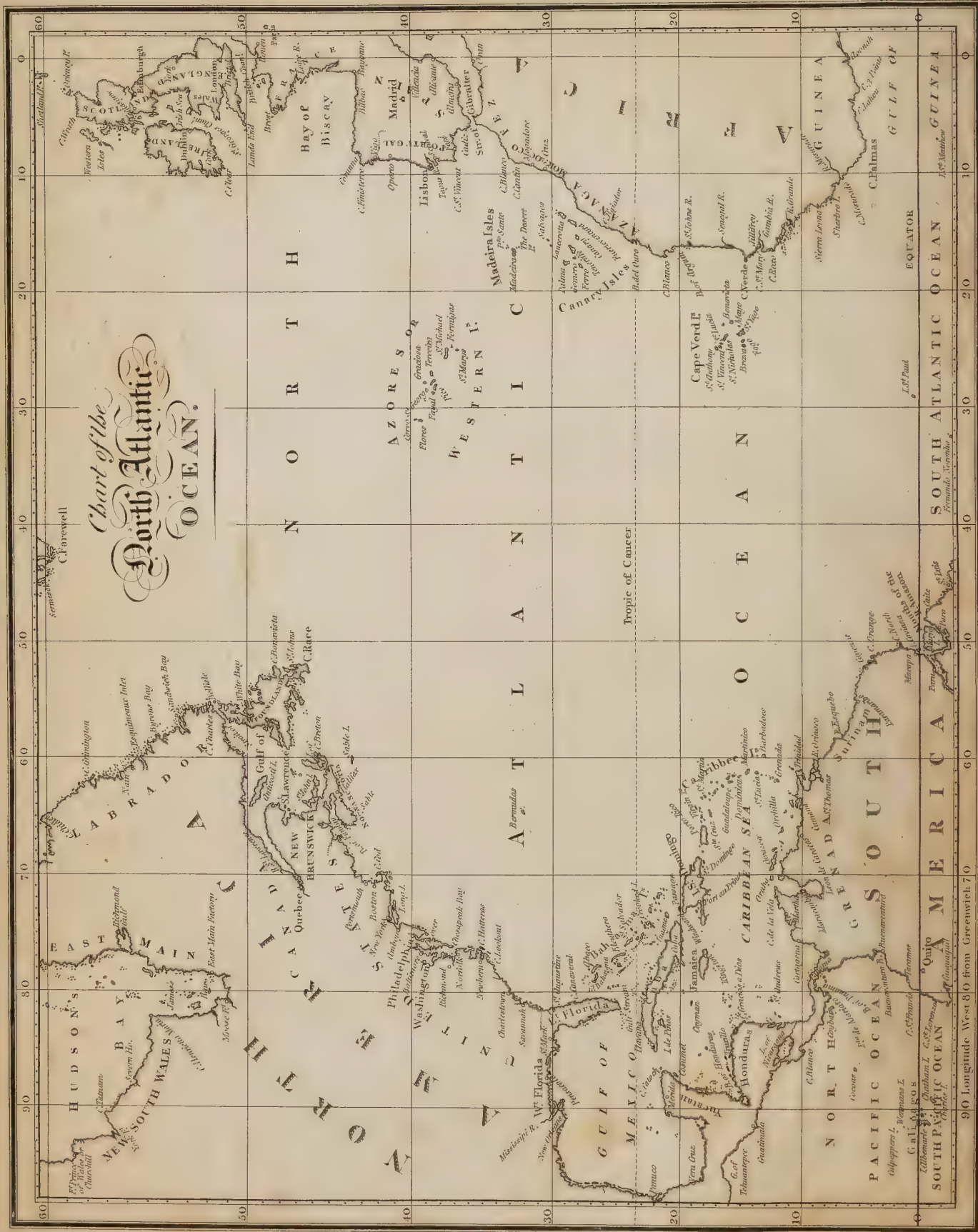
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\* \* \* The island of Madeira, in most respects, lies within the sphere of those arguments which relate to the union of the Azores with Great Britain. This island has already been well described ; particularly by Mr. Barrow, in his narrative of a voyage to China.









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# LETTERS,

&c.

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## LETTER I.

---

### INTRODUCTORY.

IT is an observation, not less true than common, that voyages and travels are, of all kinds of reading, the most entertaining and instructive; as they serve to acquaint us with the produce and condition, the religion and government, the manners and customs, of the different nations of the world, and with the curiosities of the countries which those nations respectively inhabit. They present to us at once a body of natural and of civil history; and insensibly tend to enlarge our minds and to free them from narrow and illiberal prejudices.

Numerous works of this description have, at various times, been offered to the public; but none of them,

so far as I have been able to learn, have given any rational or well-digested account of the Azores. And yet the Azores constitute, at this moment, a subject highly interesting to the public curiosity, both from the commercial advantage it is of to this country, and the probability that it may, in a short time, be included amongst the colonies of the British Empire.

In requesting your attention to a subject of such extraordinary importance, and so intimately connected with the commercial welfare of England, I pledge myself to encroach on your time as little as possible. My object is neither to indulge in declamation, nor to engage in controversy. I shall simply describe the track I have pursued; and, if I digress, my object will be found rather to instruct than to amuse. My letters, not too long to weary, shall be intended to illustrate the history, and explain the manners, customs, habits, and peculiarities, of the Azoreans; many of which have suffered little by the lapse of ages. My fidelity, too, shall appear in every page: it is no part of my intention to surprize with extraordinary incidents, or to alarm with hair-breadth escapes. The narrative, therefore, can raise neither wonder nor astonishment; but, I trust, it may afford such entertainment as truth and observations,



clothed in an unornamented style, are generally found to yield.

I am justly sensible, notwithstanding, that the subject is of an extensive and difficult nature. To paint a country with precision, requires not only great delicacy of taste, but repeated opportunities for observation. Two different landscapes may be formed by the same materials, as they are influenced by a bright or a gloomy sky. Distant views may be splendidly exhibited, or entirely concealed. Even the same objects may assume a different appearance, as they are illuminated by a rising or a setting sun. To give an accurate portrait of Nature in the light and situation in which he beheld her, is all that can be expected of him who pretends to delineate her features. When he presumes to correct them, his attempt becomes more dangerous and difficult. He must then be instructed by art, and enlightened by taste. He must be able to combine, in his imagination, those beauties which are widely scattered over the face of the creation, and form them into a perfect whole. But this is to change, not to follow, Nature. The celebrated statue of the Venus de Medicis had never existed, if the statuary had confined his imitation to any single beauty. That surprizing effort of human genius owes its perfection to the collected charms of a number of

individuals. The painter, therefore, should not be permitted to bring together all the pleasing features of Nature for the distinct purpose of constituting a natural landscape. Nothing is to be allowed to the imagination. He should confine himself to the spot on which he stands, and introduce nothing alien to the scene presented. The eye of truth should never be offended, merely that the picturesque eye may be gratified.

I may also remark, that the power which the imagination has over these natural scenes is not greater than the power which they have over the imagination. No country, described by art, however beautiful, however adorned, can distend the mind like just and simple scenery. The wild sallies of untutored genius often strike the imagination more forcibly than the most correct effusions of a cultivated mind. Though the eye, therefore, might take more pleasure in a view of the Azores in a picturesque light; that is, adorned by the hand of Art, yet I much doubt whether such a view would have that strong effect on the imagination as when rough, as it shall be from my pen, with all its bold irregularities about it; as, when beauty and deformity, grandeur and horror, mingled together, strike the mind with a thousand opposing ideas, and, like chymical combinations of an opposite nature, produce an effer-



vescence which no harmonious mixtures could possibly produce.

But, as it is in a commercial light, in particular, that I wish to recommend the Azores to the attention of the British government, I shall open that point of view in my next letter, and at the same time expose the motives which induce me to submit this correspondence to your judgment and consideration. In the mean time, I have the honour to remain, with the most sincere sentiments of esteem and respect,

Your attached Servant.

## LETTER II.

---

### INTRODUCTORY.

IF a life spent in the zealous cultivation of moral virtue, and the most assiduous endeavours for promoting both public and private happiness, deserve my veneration, it is that of yours ; the animated mind to which I have, in the genuine spirit of freedom, presumed to address this correspondence.

I confess that it affords me pleasure, and, perhaps, gratifies my vanity, to be permitted to address my communications to a member of the British parliament, whose system of policy is at length arousing the spirit of our country. The political and commercial map of Europe you have attentively examined ; and the annals of past ages you have studiously explored, to enlighten the present age. But the clear comprehension of a general subject, which involves a variety of separate parts ; that lucid arrangement which, by happily grouping particulars, fixes them on the retina of the intellect ; that copiousness of diction, elegant as becomes the leader



of a band of patriots, but not too much adorned for a man of business, which distinguishes you in general; were never displayed to greater advantage than in the debates on the decline of commercial credit. On no former occasion did you discover, and in a stronger degree to the astonishment or impression of your audience, your profound acquaintance with the system of European politics; the great national views which suggest themselves only to a great and virtuous mind; the rapid glance of argument, and the electric flash of decision. Animated with the breath of better times, your lustre appeared to increase, while you delivered those effusions of a luminous intellect, and a correct imagination. Your arguments were at once marked with the *lumen purpureum juventæ*, and with the sage maturity of manhood: Characters of this kind, that rise to honourable celebrity, without forsaking their station, are those to which a work of political and commercial consequence, may, with propriety, be addressed.

If the chief symptom of wisdom which nations can discover, is to accommodate themselves to their situation, the wisest measures that we can at present adopt, are certainly such as tend to augment our revenue, to improve our industry, and give a wider circulation to

trade and commerce. An improved intercourse with the Azores, presents a fair and most inviting field for this purpose. The vicinity of the situation, the frequent returns of profit, and a country that brings more than half a million of inhabitants within the sphere of our industry, form, however, the least prominent features of the prospect. What I mean to propose, embraces advantages which a political philosopher would rather wish for, than expect to see fulfilled. And the reason is, that the political philosopher individually, as well as the public, generally, is completely ignorant of the extent and capacity of the Azores. He judges of these islands from their political degradation, and not from their geographical condition. Whereas, the geographical condition of the Azoreans has not been so neglected by Providence, nor is their climate so frigid, their soil so infertile, their minds so stolid, that they could have been so long secreted from the world, so long in an outcast condition, had their islands met with that generous treatment which nature, humanity, and just policy, would have allowed them. What has been the use made of these interesting islands for the last two centuries? They have only answered to countenance, or to serve, a wretched government, the system of which destroys the seal of social security, and places



the public liberty, the industry of the poor, the property of the rich, and the talents of the learned, under the arbitrament of a cabinet, which has long since involved, in the vortex of venality, all the freedom of, and means of improvement from, the Azores ; removing, at the same time, every stimulating principle to personal ambition. The government, under the direction of this impolitic cabinet, turned the Azores into a headless and a heartless trunk ; annihilated the rights of the inhabitants ; withered their capacities and their prospects ; and granted them, in return, the indigent blessings of their sovereignty and protection ! Believe me, Sir, long since would the Azores have cast off the slough of barbarism ; long since would they have emerged from the oblivious pool, and awakened to life and to recollection, had not a smooth, fair, and florid, civilization been checked, by the filth, neglect, infamy, and indigence, which too commonly proceed from all tyrannic and ecclesiastical governments. It is contrary to the nature of things and to human nature, that either capital or speculation can ever fix their choice upon islands where there is no political liberty ; and, of consequence, no personal security ; where virtue, talent, and property, are annually expatriated ; where all the regular distinctions of rank in society sink under ecclesiastics and the military ; and

10      GENERAL REMARKS ON THE AZORES, &c.

where the ruling power draws every thing of use or ornament, in the colonies, to one central point of its state.

In my next, Sir, I shall make some deduction from this argument : at present, I have only leisure to entreat you to consider me as

Your grateful Servant.



### LETTER III.

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#### GENERAL REMARKS ON THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE AZOREANS, AND THE MEANS OF IMPROVEMENT.

IT was my intention to have shewn in my last letter, that aristocratical arrogance, and political as well as religious intolerance, annexed to the extreme of political servility, have been the causes from which the Azores have been so lowly appreciated by the inhabitants, and so little known to the rest of the world: I shall, however, now assume a more pleasing task, and endeavour to point out a system for the improvement of the islands, and for raising the population to the rank of freemen.

The existence of these islands, Sir, has been, for a long and gloomy period, confined to a hollow sound in a pompous title. Nature, habit, education, virtuous pride, honourable ambition, all concur to make me detest this miserable state of political degradation, and to urge the honour and propriety of making the islands

free and independent; and of placing them under the protecting shield of the British government. Above all to confer on the inhabitants the name of a country, the happiness of a home. COUNTRY I consider as the great and virtuous spring and incitement to every thing generous in speculation, or magnanimous in action. With a consciousness of this sentiment, a man becomes, as a member of the community, capable of every thing good and great; without it, he loses much more than half of his value in the estimation of others, and even in his own. Without a *country*, a people have none of that cementing principle which constitutes the character, the honour, and courage, of a nation. May I ask—What have such a people? They have a number, but they have not a nation. Without any inherent principle or motive of common action; unattached to each other; degraded in their own estimation; contemptible and contemned in that of others; they degenerate into the infamous and contented subjects of mockery or maltreatment, as it suits the humour of their different governors. As a man, therefore, entertaining a fixed abhorrence, an instinctive antipathy, to those systems which tend to degrade mankind, I would recommend that you Sir, should countenance the plan of a political constitution for these islands, which will approximate to the nature and



effects of independency ; to the good old British constitution. A constitution, which is the prolific parent of public credit and domestic comfort ; which embraces a limited prerogative and a privileged people !

As to the mercantile effects of the measure, although I have ample testimony of their importance, I would disdain to make them the basis of the question. Yet, as profit and loss constitute the incorporating principles by which the question is ultimately to be judged, I shall here stoop to shew, that it is for the interest of England to turn her affections, her protection, and her understanding, to the advantage of the people of the Azores.

From the superior industry, ingenuity, and capital, which the protection of England would immediately create, the instant advantages to the Azores are obvious ; nor are the future contingent. One line of liberal policy and active industry, pursued for ten years, would make these islands the envy and admiration of surrounding nations, and raise them from the indigence, uncertainty, and fluctuation, in which they have so long remained. Speculation, which has often been so pernicious to their commercial adventurers, would be prevented ; while illicit trade would be checked, a fair intercourse

with the world would be encouraged; and, while the revenues of individuals increased, the resources and capital of the islands would be augmented.

In former times, Sir, when Great Britain held the balance of Europe, and was the guardian and the umpire among contending nations, her feelings, as well as her politics, prompted her to adopt the Roman maxim, to oppose the strong, and protect the feeble, "*Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.*" From these views, and this spirit, she should shed her protecting lustre over the Azores, and lift them into individual distinction, and general renown.

An objection to this may, perhaps, be made, referring to the moral spirit of the inhabitants. You may be told, that the love of glory is here unknown: that the Azoreans are mere animals, who consider only what will fatten them. This objection I have already removed. The latent spirit of the people has ceased to operate—or, rather, it has been palsied under the arbitrary hand of their present government. They are, however, a good and an honest people, who prefer the olive to the laurel, and who seek for distinction by industry rather than by arms. An innocent people, as eminent in the humble



vale of pacific life as the warrior and the hero in the stormy regions of blood and warfare. But, inspire them with enthusiasm, with an enthusiasm for country, the great spring of all intellectual and moral excellence, and you will find them no strangers to the refined and even best virtues of society. Inspire this enthusiasm, and another race of people shall arise in the Azores, that may infuse a new principle of health into the battered constitution of the mother country, and form a glorious epoch in the history of the British isles. It will also, Sir, if you support and succeed in this measure, transmit your name to posterity as the founder of a new state, and add to your renown as the friend of freedom and of mankind.

The Azoreans are, at length, impatient of tyranny ; they are only awaiting a signal to throw off the yoke. Situated, however, as their sovereign at present is, it would not be generous to countenance any step manifesting a tendency to insurrection or force. On the contrary, I would offer the Prince Regent the most solid advantages in exchange for the independence of these islands : receiving their freedom from his dominion, in the first instance, for the blood and treasure which England has shed for his cause in Portugal. If his

highness will relinquish the Madeiras with the Azores, we may then, with propriety, surrender all claim to the great debt which he owes to the British government for his removal to, and final settlement in, his American empire.

These would be permanent advantages to Portugal. The beneficial results to England I shall detail in an early communication.

Remaining, &c. &c.



## LETTER IV.

---

ON THE ADVANTAGES OF ESTABLISHING THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE AZORES, UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

IN accelerating the emancipation of the Azores from the yoke under which they at present labour, I wish it to be explicitly understood, that it is far from my desire to see them augment the territories of the British dominions.

The British empire has already progressed to a colossal greatness, that alarms Europe, and threatens diminution and destruction even to her own possessions in the east and in the west. A philosophical inquirer into human affairs may well hesitate, concerning the permanence and stability of dominions that are stretched to such preternatural dimensions, and that comprehend such large divisions of the two most celebrated continents of the globe. An empire so extended contains the principles of discord and disunion within itself; the jealousy of the world will awake; nothing but military force,

the ascendant of a vigorous character, and the charm of a great name, can preserve such multifarious and discontiguous nations under one form of government.

It is an eternal political truth, confirmed by the experience of ages, that all measures taken to extend the boundaries of states, already arrived at an excessive greatness, are so many steps towards their declension and downfall. The great empires of Asia, in ancient times, and the extensive monarchy of Charlemagne, are memorable instances of states, strained beyond their natural dimensions, which have fallen with the same facility with which they arose. Since the time of Charles and James, Great Britain has been happy in a succession of sovereigns equally distinguished by their ambition and their policy; but, whenever the sceptre of Britain shall pass into the hands of a wicked, weak, or profligate, Prince, subdivisions will be made of the British empire, and new kingdoms, states, and governments, will rise upon its ruins.

The proposal, then, Sir, which I submit to your judgment on this subject, cannot contribute to the difficulties into which England is falling, nor can it be interpreted into the dream or vision of a political projector. I do not invite the people of the Azores to rebel against their



lawful sovereign. I do not tempt the English government to violate their faith with the house of Braganza, and to assume an authority which is now inefficient and nugatory in that house. All I propose is, to purchase freedom and happiness for the islands in exchange for the blood and treasure which England has expended in the Braganza cause. To raise the Azores to the dignity of self-government, and to that concord, order, and harmony, which are unknown to a people subject to the rule of a distant, uncertain, and fluctuating, administration. And, after bestowing on them these transcendent blessings, to secure them by a disinterested and honourable protection. Perhaps the best system of government for the Azores would be an establishment, similar to that of the late Swiss republic: the nine islands to comprize a confederacy under the marine and military protection of England; holding, at the same time, the entire direction of their civil, ecclesiastical, and domestic polity.

If these important arrangements can be accomplished for the Azores, my hopes of a golden age, yet to come, will revive; but if the English nation has not spirit to attempt, and resolution to prosecute, the plan; if, sunk in sensuality, and enervated by pleasure and dissipation, it sees not the chains, it hears not the complaints, of the

suffering people ; if it presumes on its riches, its commerce, its learning, its arts, its navy, and its power ; if it vaunts itself on the pre-eminence it holds among the nations of the earth ; if it can be swayed by no considerations of humanity and independence ; then shall I live and despair.

Should England refuse to prosecute and accomplish the plan, on the mere principles of GENEROSITY and independence ; I pledge myself to prove, before I close this correspondence, that it is TO HER INTEREST to execute it, and to put it into an immediate, active, and efficient, operation. The following is an epitome of the arguments on which I predicate this opinion :—

1. England is in a novel and tremendous state: most tremendous, because its novelty does not seem to surprize, nor its terror to alarm. The sword and the sceptre of Europe are conveyed into one hand. Hosts more numerous than the crusaders ; an empire more powerful than the Roman ; talents and force, such as never before were united ; are all associated against you. The boundaries, the thrones, the laws of nations, are changed ; all is changed, and still changes ; and every change shuts you from the continent, and is intended for your ruin. Under circumstances so calamitous, it is of the first ne-



cessity to establish an independent state ; to open new channels for your commerce ; new resources for your revenue, and a depôt, to which all nations may repair for home and colonial produce, without being subject to the arbitrary power and malignant dominion of France. For, situated as the Azores are, between Africa, America, and Europe, a vast and a productive trade could always be carried on either in a legal or an indirect mode, particularly with Africa and America.

2. As Britain is destitute of wine colonies, it must find an alliance with the Azores extremely favourable ; the western islands being calculated to produce a vast quantity of wine, and of a quality proper for the consumption of the West Indies.

3. But a principal advantage resulting to England from the accomplishment of this plan would arise from making the islands a MILITARY DEPÔT : that is, making them a place of alterative for the constitution of the soldier, in order that, when he progresses to Africa or to the West Indies, his blood may be prepared to meet the vicissitudes of those destructive climates. There is no doubt but that this measure of precaution would save the sum of millions and the lives of thousands ; it being well known that the inhabitants of the Azores resist the

contagions of the coast of Africa, and of the banks of the Maranon, when the native of the continent of Europe shuts up and perishes.

4. As the central Island of Terceira, is eminently adapted for the discipline and subsistence of troops, it would be profitable always to keep such an army there, as would meet the demands of the Cape of Good Hope, and of the East and the West Indies. Troops are too commonly sent from England unseasoned and unexperienced; and often under circumstances of delay, that renders their succour unavailing. Whereas, they could be sent from the Azores in time to act on emergency, and in a state of health and discipline, calculated for the service of the state, notwithstanding the action of the sun, in any clime. I trust, that this will be thought an important consideration.

5. It having been found, after an experience of several years, that the establishment at New South Wales is attended by an enormous expense, and by results adverse or contrary to its intended purposes; might it not be highly advantageous to make the Azores supply the use of that distant settlement? You will, perhaps, immediately reply, that the execution of this plan would encourage, rather than deter men from, the commission



of crimes; as it would hold out to them, freedom, self-government, and prospects of ambition, in a temperate climate. But nothing of the kind is held out. Servitude, labour, and confinement to islands whence they could never escape, would be the conditions proposed. And, as the harbours of Fayal, Terceira, and St. Michael, stand in need of considerable labour and improvement, gangs of convicts could there be perpetually kept in useful and profitable employ.

6. And, as the islands abound in waste lands, proper for the cultivation of hemp, the vine, &c., &c., it might be deemed just and right to promote such convicts to that duty, as conducted themselves best in the construction of harbours, roads, and buildings, proper for the naval and military service of the country.

Thus, Sir, have I given a rapid sketch of the advantages to be derived, from having these islands placed under British protection. In doing this, in the place of exaggerating, I have omitted many circumstances of profit: I have said nothing of their capacity to supply the West Indies with provisions, in case of a rupture with America, nor of their ability to advance your interests in various other respects. These are particulars which are to be shed through the whole of my corre-

spondence; and to that correspondence I take leave to refer you for a refutation of all the objections which will be opposed to the advantages I have here presented to your mind.

In pursuing this subject, I see the necessity of requesting a patient attention. I must not only describe the present, but also the original, character of the islands. I must, in short, yet compose some pages on philosophical and political occurrences, before I can amuse by domestic history and passing events.



## LETTER V.

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### REMARKS ON THE HISTORY OF THE ISLANDS.

IN proportion as I proceed in this correspondence, I become more and more conscious that my undertaking is a novelty, attractive only to those whose sentiments and feelings accord with my own. To speak what I feel, tell what I see ; to sketch, with a true but rapid pencil, the state of the Azores ; and, in considering the evils and the remedies, to deliver an unbought and unbigoted opinion on the measure of their emancipation : to doubt whether I shall be heard, and, whether, if heard, I may not offend ; to do my duty not without hope, and not without fear ; those are my objects, this my situation : the inevitable fate of contemporary truth.

The difficulties to which I allude, and which obstruct my design, arise principally from the want of documents proper for the formation of a memoir on the past state of these islands. I have made the most wide and diligent research, and I have not been able to collect or to collate a single page on the subject. No traveller, no

geographer, no historian, has deigned to notice these islands in any other manner than, in giving a nomenclature of their number, and a vague and transient view of their present condition and character. Cook, Hawkesworth, Barrow, and other circumnavigators, confine themselves to this meagre description; and Salmon, Guthrie, with other geographers, are content in recording the mere names and existence of the islands. This is a matter of astonishment, inasmuch as the world has been ransacked and over-run by the curious in search of novelty, and for theatres on which to display the ambition of the voyager, and the erudition of the naturalist. Even the little islands, known by the name of *Tristan da Cunha*,\* are described by Dalrymple, in a quarto volume. And many other insulated portions of the globe, far inferior to the Azores, in all the circumstances of wealth, population, and magnitude, have been delineated in the most minute and pompous manner.

I must, here, however, observe, that I obtained, through the means of Lord Strangford at Lisbon, a large Quarto Work, entitled a History of the Azores, or Western Islands. But, Sir, judge of the mortification which I

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\* We shall notice these islands hereafter. Ed.



suffered, when I discovered the work to be the production of a visionary priest ; of a man totally unacquainted with the various circumstances he recites, and whose principal design in writing it was, to impose upon the credulous, and to propagate political servility, religious superstition, domestic calumny, philosophic error and untruth. The general and particular descriptions are unnatural and incredible, and supported by appeals to prophecies, and miracles, and various gifts of the spirit, which render their fallacy more glaring, and more subject to be disputed. The author also pretends to have been himself an eye and an ear witness of the wonders he records. He is, therefore, full of inconsistencies and contradictions ; and his miraculous facts are impossible, when we consider the priestly power to which he ascribes them ; and improbable, if we attend to the contemptible design and occasion of them. In short, the writer appears to have been dishonest and partial, and equally careless of easy confutation and of certain infamy. He seems capable of feeling no sentiment, of uttering no thought, but those which would have befitted a monkish polemic of five centuries back. His very language and composition partake of this complexion of mind, and bear ample testimony that the holy father was designed for some of those ages which are gone by ; when the religious zealot evinced the purity of his faith by the

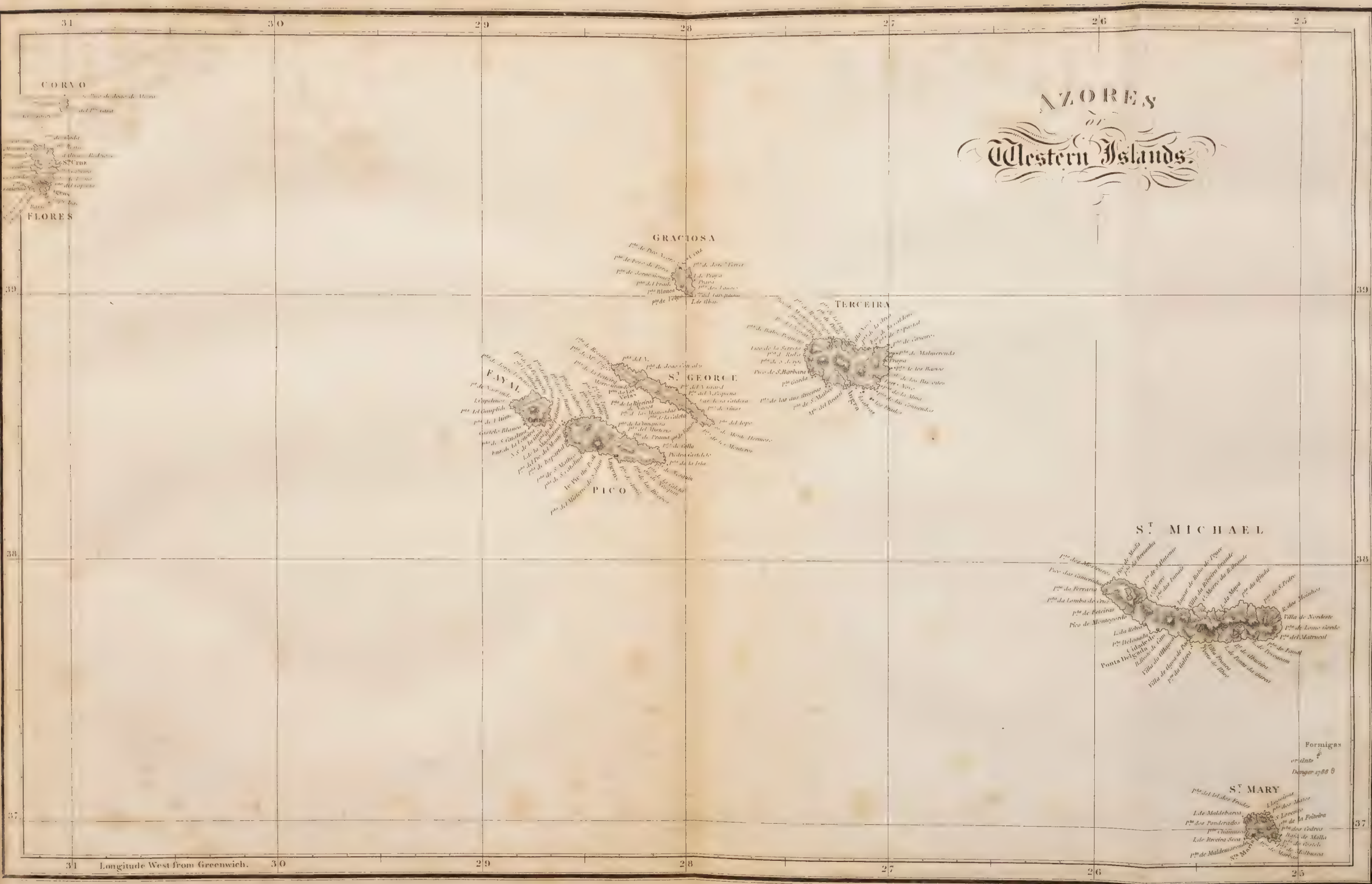
foulness of his language ; and displayed the Christian charity of his heart by the intolerance and persecution of his spirit.

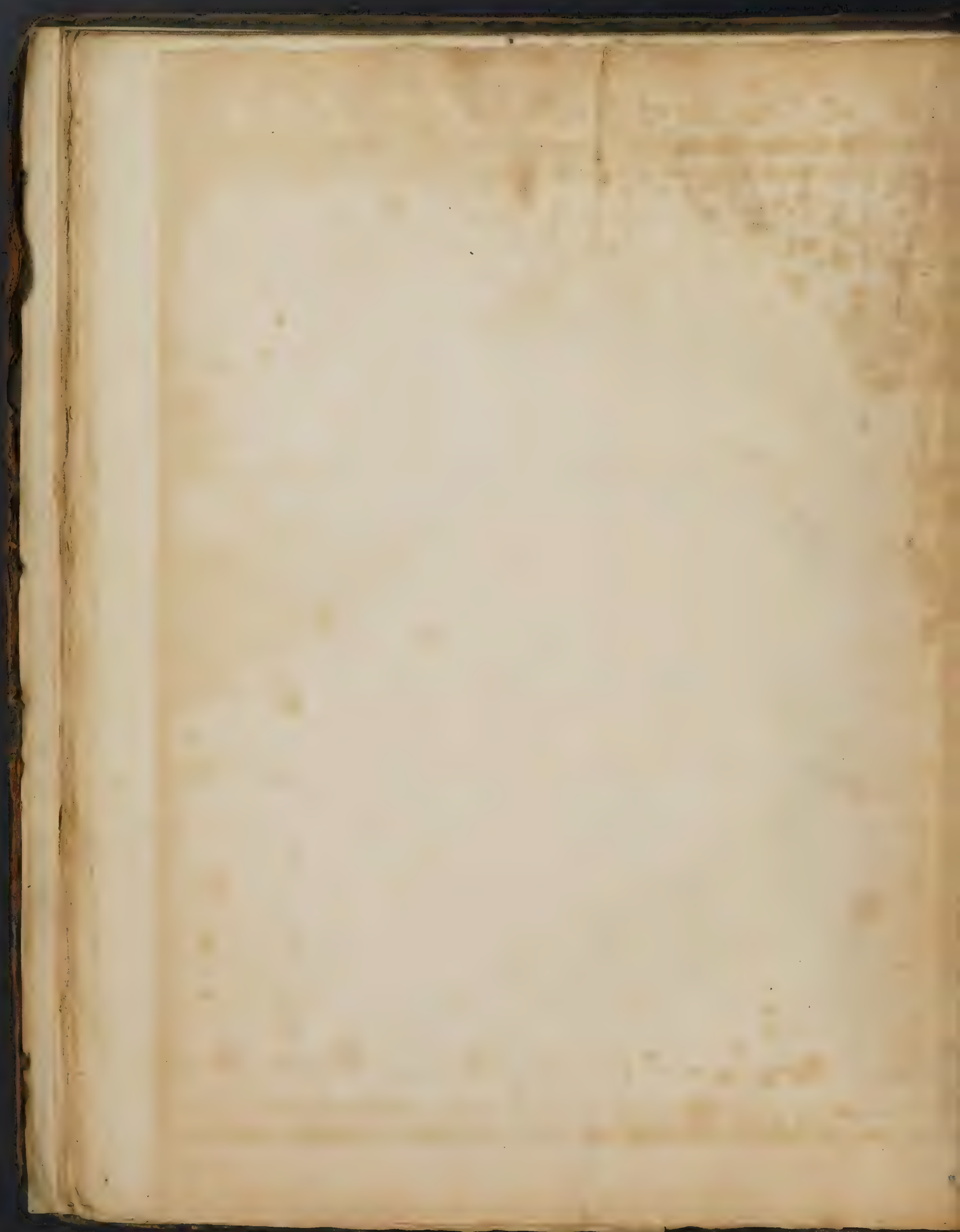
Thus, then, Sir, am I cast upon my own observation and research for my intended History of these Islands. It is, however, among the few felicities of the undertaking, that my account cannot be obscured by literary lumber, or filled with trash already imposed upon the public. In fact, the public knows nothing more of the Azores, or Western Islands, than that they extend from  $37^{\circ}$  to  $39^{\circ} 45'$  N. latitude, and from  $25^{\circ}$  to  $31^{\circ}$  west longitude, and in the midway between Europe and America : that they are nine in number, and are named,

- |                                   |                               |             |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Santa Maria, or St. Mary :     | 4. St. Jorge, or St. George : | 7. Pico :   |
| 2. St. Miguel, or St. Michael's : | 5. Graciosa :                 | 8. Flores : |
| 3. Terceira :                     | 6. Fayal :                    | 9. Corvo.   |

It is also known, that they were discovered, about the middle of the 15th century, by Joshua Vander Berg, of Bruges in Flanders ; who, in a voyage to Lisbon, was, by stress of weather, driven to them ; and that, on his arrival at Lisbon, he boasted of his discovery ; on which the Portuguese, in that spirit of enterprize, so strongly marked in their adventures of the day, immediately set sail and took possession of them, calling them Azores,









or Hawk's Islands, from the numerous hawks and falcons found among them.—This being the substance of all that is published as to the origin of the discovery of the Islands, I shall take up my subject at this exact point, and proceed without interruption, in my promised history.

From Vander Berg's description, and from the best authenticated annals, it appears that the Azores were, on their first discovery, entirely destitute of inhabitants, and of every description of animals, except hawks, falcons, crows, and some few species of migratory birds. This circumstance was extremely favourable to the Portuguese settlers. To extend, secure, and establish, a new government, they had no occasion to employ either treachery or violence ; no necessity to wade through seas of blood, or scenes of massacre. They prized the land which they thus obtained without carnage, and valued fields which they found fertile, though unmanured by the slaughter of friends and foes. Influenced by such benign considerations, they lived together for a considerable time, in the greatest simplicity of heart, and in the most inviolable harmony. Content to pursue an obscure, and primitive life, they cultivated the soil, and bartered its produce, with traders from Lisbon, for the

few necessities which they required from the mother-country. To these strangers they were extremely hospitable ; nor were they less charitable to their own infirm and poor ; for whose relief, each family in the respective islands contributed a monthly share ; and, at every festival, sent them, besides, a portion of provision, suited to the exigencies of their case. But this state of life was of short duration ; in a moment of dark mystery and bold imposition, Spain formed a plan for the seizure and subjugation of the islands ; and she decisively insisted on its speedy and final accomplishment. An armament was fitted out ; a descent was made : horror and dismay were soon seen throughout the once happy Azores. The king's governors, and the deputies of the deputies, were strangers and soldiers, needy and tyrannical ; their duty, conquest ; their reward, plunder ; their residence, an encampment ; their administration a campaign. As the superior arms or arts of the Spaniards changed the Portuguese into abject subjects ; their jurisdiction was enlarged, but they had no laws to dispense, no civilization to communicate.

Among such men it was, that a *different order* of the Spanish people sought refuge from the violence and cruelty of their own government. The time appears to



have been towards the latter part of the reign of the fifth Ferdinand,\* when those who governed Spain under him, with no less cruelty than impolicy, made the Spaniards of Moorish extraction desperate ; and then plundered, imprisoned, or butchered, them, for the natural effects of such despair. The best and worthiest men were often the objects of their most unrelenting fury ; whilst many of the moderate and wise fled to the Azores, and united themselves to all those islanders who were determined to stand up in defence of the laws, and of a better government. These, in their turn, became a race of people uncorrupted in their manners, and happy in their lives : they were not, indeed, acquainted with those ornamental accomplishments by which human nature is exalted ; they were only intimate with those useful arts, by which society is made happy. I shall resume this interesting epoch in my next : I abandon it at present, because the night advances, and I am weary.

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\* Consort of Isabella, the illustrious patroness of Colon, or Columbus.

## LETTER VI.

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### REMARKS ON THE HISTORY OF THE ISLANDS, CONTINUED.

AN improved state of cultivation and civilization ; loyalty and affection towards the monarch ; a ready obedience to the laws ; opulence and munificence among the higher classes ; comfort and cheerfulness among those of subordinate rank ; splendid religious establishments, filled by an exemplary clergy ; seminaries of learning, celebrated even on the continent ; charitable institutions worthy of equal celebration ; money becoming general in circulation throughout the islands ; commerce flourishing to an extent unknown to their former history ; capitals advantageously embarked in the structure of harbours, roads, and buildings ; these were the best and proudest proofs of the final conduct of the Spaniards, and of the wisdom of that system of policy by which they governed the Azores. Indeed, the more I investigate that system, the more I find reason to be satisfied with its principles ; the more I am convinced that the advancement of the islands was progressive in wealth, in comfort, in civilization, in virtue, and, con-



sequently, in happiness. This enviable state of prosperity, however, was doomed to be exposed to a rude and perilous shock. To sketch this æra, I must be permitted to enter into a short digression.

The accession of Ferdinand to the gold and silver mines of South America, was to Spain an epoch, not of her independence and wealth, but of the diffusion of luxury, impiety, and other principles, which have since sunk a country into degradation that was once envied and esteemed. Of the injustice and cruelty of the Spaniards towards the credulous Mexican and innocent Peruvian, the retribution was signal, and the result, universal. Ambition was foiled, tyranny subdued, and oppression in America conferred freedom on the isles of the Atlantic. While her right arm was employed in scourging the peaceable inhabitants of the continent, the reins and rod of Portugal were forced from her left; and distress resigned what generosity would never have bestowed.

The Azores were now separated, totally and for ever, from the house of Spain, and consigned to the original proprietor. Murmurs against this dispensation of Providence arose, but unjustly. Spain became faint and feeble; the concession, though sudden, was natural; though early, not premature.

The triumph of the Portuguese, on the re-establishment of their supremacy, was more drunken than bloody. They subverted the established institutions, dilapidated public works, and denounced, plundered, and oppressed, the whole of the Spanish community. This conduct was impolitic. The Spaniards, especially those of Moorish extraction, were a people of extraordinary endowments, great acquisitions, and transcendent arrogance. Bold and haughty in their speech, daring in their thoughts, and fixed in their resolves, the stature of their mind over-topped that of the bigoted Portuguese, and caused them to despise their dominion, and to revolt against their subjugation. In wrath, too, less violent than sudden; in revenge, not frequent, but implacable; in character, possessing something that would be obeyed, and would not bend: they were not fitted for subjects of the Portuguese; they, therefore, removed to Tenerife and the Cape Verde Islands, leaving the Azores in a depopulated and nearly original state.

Left to the government of a haughty aristocracy, with a bigoted people, these islands naturally lapsed into a long and gloomy period of degeneracy and contempt. It can answer no good purpose to dwell on this period of history: a period which presents nothing better than a consumptive population and a corrupt government,



whose superstition, meanness, and misery, have marked every succeeding generation. This is all that the history of the period has to tell; the rest is the squabble of parties, unimportant even in its day, contemptible in ours; youth became age, and age sunk into the grave in silence and ignorance: for the good of the Azores nothing has been achieved; for their improvement nothing attempted: a whole century was lost in a blank.

On this gloom, one luminary arose; and the Azores worshipped it with Persian idolatry. POMBAL was that luminary. Pombal was the first Portuguese minister whose wisdom extended to these Islands, and whose plans for their advantage was remedial for the present, and warning for the future. He first taught the Azoreans that they might become a people, and Portugal that she might cease to be a despot. During his mission, the islands were improved by his authority, adorned by his munificence, and extolled by his praise. A sullen and bigoted ministry succeeded the administration of Pombal. The Queen of Portugal was the cause of this. She became a fanatic in religion, and appointed the most furious of her churchmen to direct the helm of the state. A cabinet so formed soon destroyed the foundations of whatever prosperity had been erected in the islands, and impeded and entangled the

course of those efforts which had operated towards their emancipation and advancement. Nor was this a solitary evil. Numerous nests of ecclesiastical hornets were settled throughout the islands: shoals of locusts and swarms of drones, who, to this day, overspread the land, crawl about the streets of the cities, towns, and villages, and glut themselves in feasting upon the labour of the industrious part of the community. These men, who tread upon the necks of the people, and who rob the public in every form, to support themselves in an overgrown state of tyranny, prodigality, and luxury, have established that system of policy, which I have reprobated in a former letter, as the cause of the degeneracy of these islands, and of the ignorance of mankind, as to their capacity and value. It is a system of unbridled superstition and ferocious bigotry; a system of incessant hypocrisy and religious outrage; of moral depravity and of brutal ignorance; of wanton tyranny and worse than savage barbarity; of impiety, too, and of atheism; a system which brings, as subordinate evils in its train, the annihilation of principle, the destruction of commerce, the extinction of Arts and Sciences, and all the horrors of indigence, famine, and disease.

The possibility of the prevalence of such a system would not be credited, were it not known that, all the



islands are under the religious dominion of a sordid and luxurious priesthood, and subject to the civil controul of a licentious military power. A government which condemns the country to a perpetual state of ignorance and sloth, and which confines the whole of its intercourse with the civilized world to the Banks of the Tagus, or the Port of Lisbon. For the last hundred and fifty years, these peaceable islanders have had to withdraw their eyes from the rest of the world, from every general public care, from every generous manly thought, and to fix them steadily and perpetually on the court of Portugal. A court whose plodding head looked down and mocked its heart; which reasoned itself out of honour, out of patriotism, out of every great propensity of the soul. What was it to such a court, if rape and murder were committed by its priests and military in the Azores? What, if desolating fires and volcanic eruptions destroyed the villages and the peasantry? What, if its governors and ecclesiastics set their obscene domination on the neck of this innocent race? What, of all this? Nothing. Believe me, such a government can tremble for no generous people; no unhappy colonists. It throws not its eyes upon a distant people, their fields, or their happiness, but confines itself to the spot where itself was born, or the palace where it resides. Upon all this globe of earth, therefore, the Azoreans have been per-

mitted to discern no spot, but the city and court of Lisbon: hence their ignorance and degeneracy: hence the public ignorance on the subject of their condition and capacity. I hasten now to conclude; perceiving a tendency to fall into declamation, which cannot be agreeable to you.



## LETTER VII.

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### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLAND OF ST. MIGUEL, OR ST. MICHAEL.

AS I purpose describing the islands in detail, accordingly as I visited them, I shall now suppress all general argument, and give my correspondence the nature and character of a narrative. This mode will be productive of facility to me, and of a clear and permanent light to you and to the public, whose pleasure and information is the sole object of my desire, and pride of my employment.

Three years have nearly elapsed since I first visited the Azores. The circumstance was accidental. I was on my passage home from South America, after a departure of forty days, when land was discovered, almost in every direction, from our quarter-deck. The ship's reckoning justly told them to be the Western Islands. They appeared in sight thus :—St. Michael's right-ahead ; Terceira on the larboard, and St. Mary on the starboard, bow ; with Pico and Fayal on the larboard

quarter. I no sooner beheld this gratifying sight—gratifying to me, who was exhausted by a long voyage, and with a constitution shaken by a residence of several months immediately under the line, than I resolved to put into St. Michael's, and, after visiting the islands, and recovering my health, return to England by some other opportunity. Having communicated this intention to the captain of the vessel I was in, he shaped his course for the end of St. Michael's, and, after a run of seven hours along the southern coast, cast anchor in the open road-stead of the City of Ponta Delgada.

I cannot say that the observations I had to make, on first viewing the northern extremity of the island, were by any means favourable; no; nothing appeared but mountains of a stupendous height and bulk, and of a nature and disposition that bid defiance to all the arts that have been introduced by human industry, for the improvement of agriculture and the comfort of society. The beach appeared like many ramified pillars of basaltes, and the trees, with which it was crowned, were produced by a soil so shallow and indigent, that their growth was stunted, and their roots compelled to extend themselves horizontally along the surface of the ground. The impression, however, made by this scene of rough and craggy cliffs, either piled on each other, or separate,



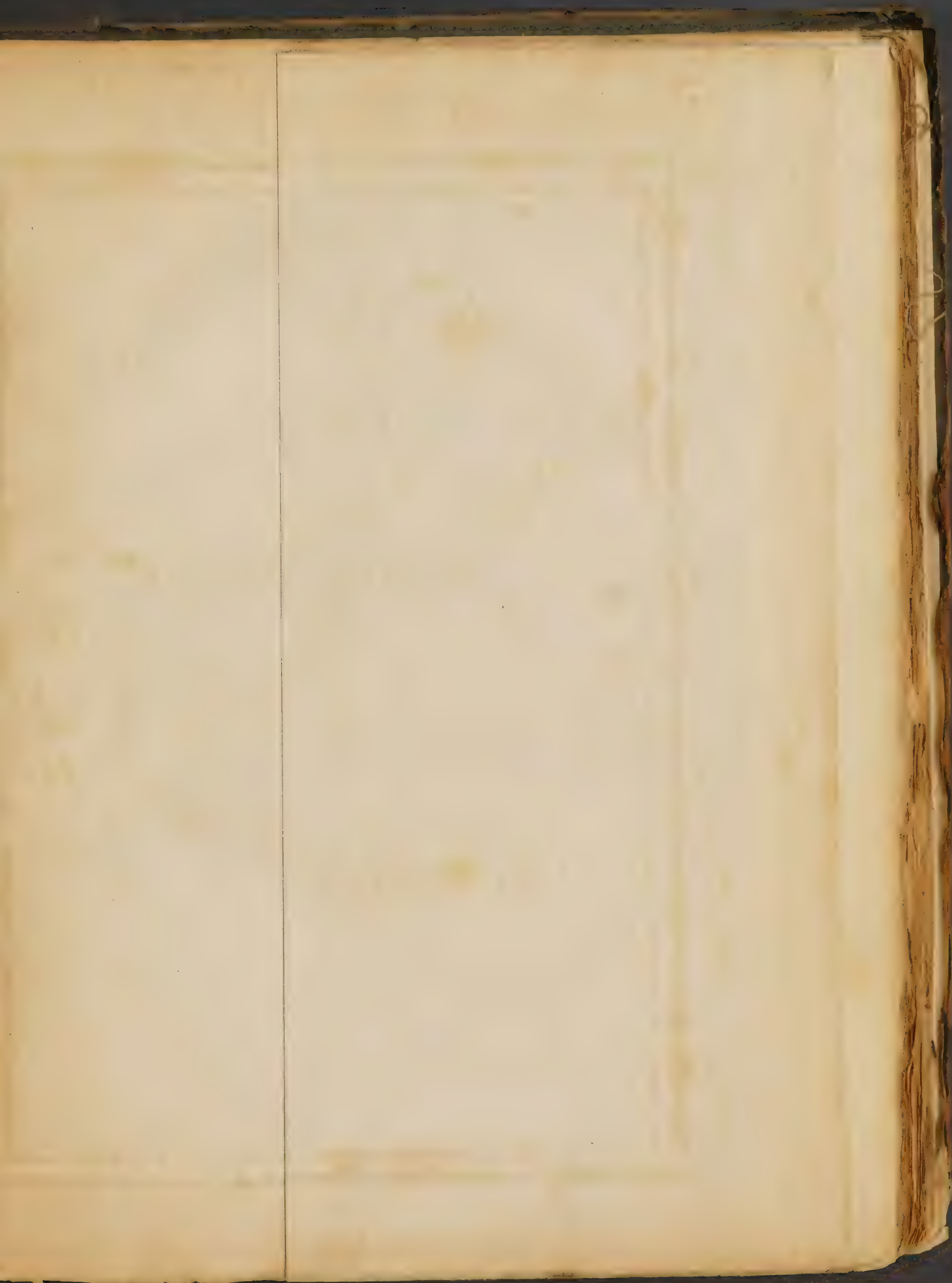
was soon dissipated by the pleasing contrast of the southern coast ; which presented, for several miles, the prospect of an inclined plane composed of a soil which appeared peculiarly favourable to luxuriant vegetation. Open pasture, bounded by woods and vineyards, and corn fields, interspersed with orange gardens, every where met the eye, and in points of view that shewed the soil to be fertile and productive. The more I approached this delightful region, the more I discovered that Nature and Art went hand in hand, and that a certain degree of wildness was suffered to pervade the whole, which, as it resembled Nature in its beauty, resembled it also in its use and benefit to society. Nature might be said to have made this a favourite spot, to which she was more than ordinarily kind and liberal of her bounties ; and which bespoke improvement by leaving, if the paradox may pass, so little room for improvement.

To enable you, however, to form a just estimate of this description, it is proper to remark that, the impression which produced it was made on a remarkably fine day : one of those days in which Nature unfolds all her brightest charms, and opens, as it were, her whole treasury of blessings. The inimitable beauty, extent, and variety, of the prospects, the verdure of the fields and meadows, the agreeable fragrantcy of the air, the lustre,

mildness, and benignity, of the Heavens ; in a word, the whole scene contributed to inspire the idea, that all were made for our peculiar gratification ; feeling our spirits cheered and enlivened ; our imaginations warmed and entertained ; our rational faculties exercised and invigorated. In this agreeable consciousness, every anxious and peevish thought appeared to vanish, and the soul seemed open to every grateful and affectionate sentiment towards the great author of its happiness !

Pardon these digressive expressions, and accept my apology. I now only add that, on landing at the City of Ponta Delgada, I was escorted to the residence of a gentleman, Mr. Read, the British consul, where I was invited to take up my abode, and allowed leisure to recover from the fatigue of a long voyage, and the debility of a southern climate.









## LETTER VIII.

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ST. MICHAEL'S.—ITS GENERAL CONFORMATION, &c.

I should have imagined, had I not known you to be very different from the generality of men, that you would not be pleased with so dull a subject as that on which I write. But I know you so well as to be convinced that you wish me to continue my speculations, and in such a way as I am best qualified to pursue.

Pourtrayed to you as I have been, you may conjecture that, the pleasures of the town, or the hospitality of Mr. Read, did not efface the impressions already delineated, or divert me from the desire I expressed of becoming acquainted with the general character of the island. Such conjecture would not be ill founded. I was ever and anon relapsing insensibly into the subject, and could scarcely converse on any thing so entirely foreign to it, but which served in some way or other to renew the determination. Thus impelled, I hastened to make a tour of the island. The detail of that tour I shall com-

municate in some subsequent letter : the general impression shall receive its colouring in this.

It abundantly appears, that, the island of St. Michael was originally a beautiful plain, covered with aromatic plants ; a kind of wilderness of sweets formed of rich verdure and beautiful trees. It, at this day, however, consists of a number of mountains, hills, and declivities, none of which are primitive, but evidently the gradual production of volcanic eruptions. Hence the bold assertion, that the island existed as a plain before it was covered by mountains and hills. That the whole was formed at the same time by sub-marine fires, is an hypothesis which cannot be maintained, because the existing levels are composed of primitive substances, totally void of calcareous matter, or of apparent effervescence from marine and mineral contents, and because the mountains and hills evidently indicate, by their conical figure and the cavity at their top, their being the distinct production of fire. They bear unequivocal marks of the effects of this destructive agent, in an accumulation of lava, scorixæ, and volcanic sand. Whether the origin of these mountains is to be traced to one immense mass of fire, or whether they are to be ascribed to the effort of ignited matter, in various places of local conflagration, is a subject beyond my discussion. It is



certain that there have been numerous eruptions, that every great eruption produced a new mountain, and that the island may be regarded, not as the production of a single volcano, but of an assemblage of volcanoes, many of which are extinguished, or burn internally and invisibly, and many that act visibly in the ejaculation of small portions of mineral lava and boiling water. There are circumstances, also, that afford strong reasons for believing, that there were there principal craters, whose vortex now form the three great lakes situated in the center and in the north and southern extremities of the island. From these craters vast mountains have been thrown up; and, in proportion as these ceased to vomit forth matter, partial eruptions burst out, and formed the lateral hills and declivities, which extend themselves in every direction from the mountains that surround the lakes. Why the principal and inferior craters ceased to vomit lava and flame is also evident. After a long lapse of ages, the waters of the springs and rivers, and, in some instances, the waters of the ocean gained access to each crater, and suddenly extinguished the effervescence of their mineral contents. In consequence of this event, the fires ceased to burn, or had to retire beyond the action of the water, or to stations where its office is now confined to boiling the water, with various degrees of activity and force.

Besides these remains of burning mountains and volcanoes, the whole island presents the most decisive evidence of its having been the theatre of repeated earthquakes and convulsive shocks. In most countries, earthquakes are produced by sulphur and nitre, or by sulphur sublimed from pyrites, and ignited, in subterraneous caverns, by a fermentation of vapours, which gives an appulse to the neighbouring combustible matter, and causes it to be discharged with a noise like thunder, and sometimes with an eruption of water and wind. But here the earthquakes have been occasioned by a contrary cause; by the bursting in of the waters upon the mineral fires; an agency which must have instantly produced sudden blasts, violent explosions, rumbling in the bowels of the earth, and that lifting up of the ground above it, which occasions havoc and devastation, till it gets vent or discharge. That this is the case in this island, appears incontrovertible, for many of the existing extinguished volcanoes, which served as so many spiracles for the discharge of subterranean fire, are rent and torn asunder, by the violent effervescence caused by the sudden conjunction of elements of such contrastic natures, or opposing properties. Nor is the effect produced by this unnatural confluence confined to cissures in the craters, and rents in the cliffs; some mountains have been precipitated



into the adjacent valleys, others upset from their base, and some swallowed up in the bosom of that earth whence they originally rose in lava, scorïæ, and sand. These phænomena do not depend upon conjecture; they are supported by testimony which instantaneously strikes conviction and commands belief. The *base* of the precipitated mountains exhibits palpable remains of decomposed substances, originally produced on the surface of the globe; the strata of the mountains merely upset is displayed in perpendicular, not in horizontal, stratum, and those mountains which have been swallowed up, have left behind them frightful chasms, tremendous precipices, or form the beds of immense and beautiful lakes. The more perfect mountains are of a conical or hemispherical figure, as formed by continued eruptions, and their exterior is distinguished by characters which denote both the distance and the nature of the conflagration. The lava, on some, appearing in craggy eminences; and, on others, in a state of decomposition, forming a soil highly fertile and productive. The intervals, also, in many instances, derive their complexion and features from the direction and propulsion of the lava. Where that destructive agent ran without interruption, it served to fill up inequalities, and to form a lovely champaign country; but where its course was impeded and perturbed, it has left several little islands, or hillocks, which

exhibit a singular appearance, with all the bloom of luxuriant vegetation, encompassed and rendered almost inaccessible by mountains of volcanic ashes, and rugged heaps of ferruginous and pumice stone. In short, St. Michael's possesses the most heavenly spots upon earth ; and, if it resembles hell within, those spots make it resemble paradise without. Here, the ground is fertile, and its productions luxuriant ; there, are all the elements of destruction.

Fortunately, however, for the inhabitants, this island is *now* of such a structure and conformation, that the water may pass freely and without impediment throughout the volcanic caverns therein, and easily get out, without shaking or disturbing the earth, in the manner which it did when subterraneous communication was wanting, and when the water, on coming in contact with the fire, was propelled through the spiracles of the crater, thereby forcing and removing all obstacles, heaving up and shocking the earth, and rushing forth with a loud bellowing, and devastating velocity. One hundred years have elapsed since the people have been terrified by volcanic explosions of this dreadful nature. Since that period, or since the domination of the waters over the mineral and metallic fires, this island has been exposed to no considerable shock, and what is now



heard, and that perpetually in several places, resembles the flowing and ebullition of waters, and a dull noise like that of a heavy carriage rolling along with a rapid and unremitting motion.

As a farther testimony of the serenity of this island from volcanic eruptions, I shall state, that in consequence of the introduction of the waters into its subterraneous caverns, and of the washing away of the sulphur and nitre from their arches, the fire has not only ceased to appear in eruptions on the island, but is content to operate invisibly on the waters, which prevent it from rising, and also to seek for vent and aliment throughout the caverns which lie concealed and profound under the surrounding ocean. This opinion is justified by a recent event. A most awful and tremendous explosion of smoke and flames having issued from the sea, at the distance of half a league from the shore, at the western end of the island. From the bowels of the inflammatory substance, forming its passage upwards of eighty fathoms deep in the ocean, issued smoke, fire, cinders, ashes, and stones, of an immense size. Innumerable quantities of fish, some nearly roasted, and others as if broiled, floated on the surface of the sea towards the shore. But this kind of philosophical disquisition leads me from my point: I shall in future only touch

this theme as occasion demands: satisfied to remark, that, without this general view of the physical state of the island, my particular account would, in many instances, appear imperfect, and my sentiments on many points absurd.



## LETTER IX.

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DESCRIPTION OF ST. MICHAEL'S, CONTINUED.—ITS  
TOWNS, &c.—MEANS OF ITS MELIORATION.

FROM the consideration of the exterior surface and constituent parts of this island, I shall proceed to state its dimension and capacities.

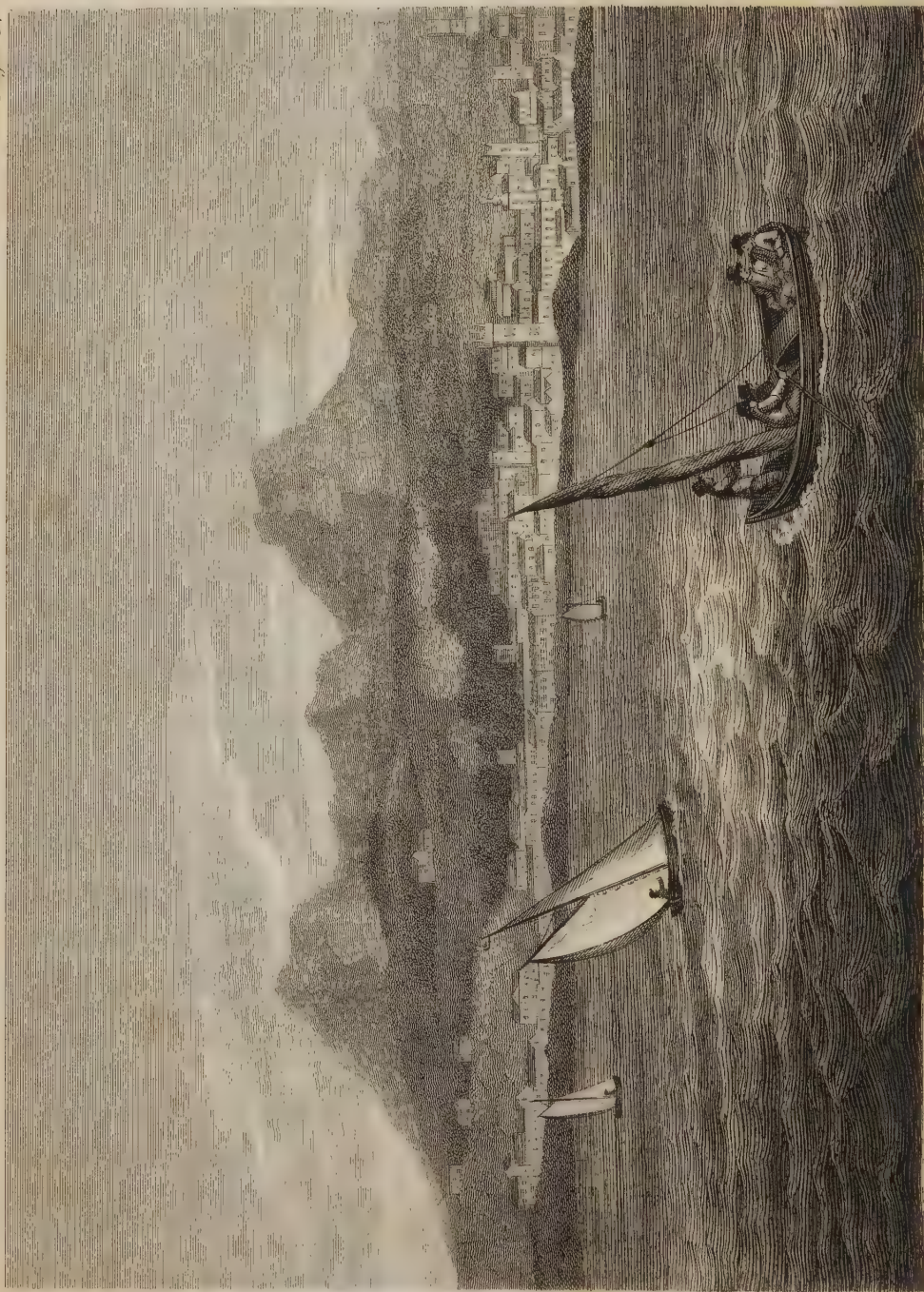
Saint Michael's is nearly one hundred English miles in circumference ; contains one city, five principal towns, fifty-four parishes, and about ninety thousand inhabitants. The coast is very bold, and may be approached without fear, in almost every part. Its military strength consists of two hundred troops in the most deplorable and insubordinate state, with six thousand peasantry, whose arms are the pikes with which they drive their cattle. The principal fortification is the castle of St. Braz, which is close to the sea, at the western end of the city of Ponta del Gada. It is mounted with twenty-four pieces of cannon, but few of which are capable of service. A league to the eastward are two small three-gun forts, inefficient and useless from decay and neglect. The

island, notwithstanding, has many strong local holds; and several of the hills and passes, if judiciously fortified, would be absolutely impregnable.

The inhabitants are compelled by law to confine their trade to Lisbon; however, since the expatriation of the court, they have assumed a wider range, and maintain a considerable commerce not only with Lisbon, but with England, Russia, and America, &c. From England they are entirely supplied with woollens, hardware, earthen-ware, and various other necessities; sending, in exchange, about seventy vessels annually with fruit, which is produced here in vast abundance. To Portugal are sent, corn, pulse, poultry, cattle, and vegetables, which are paid for in returns of tobacco, sugar, coffee, trinkets, dispensations, indulgencies, images, and relicks of rags, chips, nails, blood, and bones, belonging to the imaginary saints, &c., which imposition and superstition teach them to idolize. From America they receive boards, staves, lumber, rice, fish, pitch, tar, iron in pots and bars, and a variety of Indian goods, which are paid for, in exchange, by wines. The intercourse with Russia is similar to that with America, but on a more contracted scale. There exists, also, a ready money trade with vessels, which make the island for refreshment, the crews of which are furnished with cattle and provisions, equal







View of Gada.

View of Gada. (Ed. Gada.)



to the English, and superior to any in the world beside ; and also with wine, pleasant, and peculiarly adapted to correct the defects of a seaman's health.

PONTA DEL GADA, the city whence I write, is the principal theatre of this commerce. It appears exceedingly pleasant from the offing, and derives an air of dignity from the convents, which are numerous, and many of them considerable and handsome. There is a mole for the protection of small vessels, but those of a larger size are compelled to ride at anchor in an open roadstead. By deepening and enlarging the mole, however, it could be made capable of receiving vessels of a considerable draught of water ; and, by excavating the square of St. Francis, and cutting a canal between it and the mole, a large number of vessels could be accommodated ; and this, at a small expense, would produce the greatest and most beneficial effect to the island and its commercial relations. Till this improvement be effected, I cannot honestly recommend vessels of a great draught to visit this place, for they would be frequently subject to slip their cable whilst loading or unloading, and perhaps not recover their station for several weeks, or, at least, not dare to attempt its recovery during the prevalence of strong southerly gales.

Inconveniently as this city is situated for commercial purposes, it is still the best which the island affords. That which ranks next to it, is called RIBEIRA GRANDE. The latter is seated on the north side ; but, having no anchorage, and the harbour being filled with dangerous shoals, it is dependent on the south side for its commercial supplies. The town of VILLA FRANCA, on the south side, has a very inferior anchorage, and that for small vessels only. And, as there is no other port or safe anchorage appertaining to the island, it is evident, that the city must increase in commercial consequence, and that it is of the highest necessity to enlarge the mole and form both docks and harbours, in the manner before alluded to.

The disadvantages arising from the want of naval convenience, are greatly aggravated by the religion of the country and the nature of the government. There cannot, however, be a better proof of the natural disposition of the island than seeing it comparatively flourish, or increase in strength, even under its physical, religious, and political, difficulties ; than seeing it export annually 15,000 tons of fruit, wine, and provisions ; and, after maintaining ninety thousand inhabitants, contribute 100,000 milreas, or more than £.28,000, sterling, to its parent state.



It is here proper to observe, that, in consequence of the obstructions I have named, not only in this but in preceding letters, arts, agriculture, and commerce, are not carried to more than one twentieth degree of the extent to which they are capable of extending; nor is the population by any means proportioned to the extent of the territory, or to the improvements which it is susceptible of attaining. When I consider, therefore, these circumstances, and when I find the soil so prolific, and the climate so genial, that both European and tropical plants come to the greatest perfection, I must acknowledge a peculiar munificence in Nature towards this region; and, at the same time, in man a most culpable indifference to the promotion of those objects which at once ornament a country, and contribute to the comforts and felicity of social life.

The calculation which naturally follows this view of the present state of the island, is, what would be its future profit and improvement were it submitted to the conduct of a government, guided by an enlightened policy; professing a religion, kind and benevolent in principle, and ruling a people of activity, probity, and honour? The advantages, &c., would be abundant as ineffable; harbours would be formed, commerce in-

crease, arts revive, morals improve, religion purify, and every point of the island would be cultivated, and bear the charm of plenty. These anticipated advantages will appear more clearly from my future communications.



## LETTER X.

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### DESCRIPTION OF ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.

I AM sure that you will require no apology for my diverting your attention awhile from subjects of a public nature, to participate, ideally, in those calmer pleasures in which I have been engaged since my residence in this island. To commence this intention, I take leave to introduce you to the acquaintance of Mr. Read, the British consul of the Azores, to a residence in whose hospitable house I am indebted for much of the information which may appear in my communications.

To very considerable knowledge, as a public character, and to the purest patriotism, as a British subject, Mr. Read unites great and diversified merit as a man. He is not one of the number of those commercial people who know no entertainment beyond what their profits afford; but of those who, stepping aside sometimes from the noise and hurry of a more exposed life, can, with a much truer relish of happiness, enjoy himself or

his friend in rural solitude. Indeed, it is his peculiar felicity to have united in himself two characters rarely found together, the philosopher, and the man of business. This habitude is so natural to him, that, whether I have attended him in the mixed duties of diplomatist and merchant, or in select parties of men of letters and science, I have never been able to determine, whether he has better accommodated himself to the difficulties of the one, or the erudition of the other; for he has been universally caressed and applied to as the life and spirit of both. Perhaps no person has more of this happy popularity of disposition; and, I declare to you, I could wish, for the world's sake at least, that his worth should be known beyond the narrow circle of these neglected isles. It seems a kind of public injury, even in him, to conceal the many valuable qualifications he is master of, in shade and obscurity, which ought rather to be made conspicuous for common benefit. But he is inflexibly resolved to pursue his present course of living in his favorite Azores.

One afternoon, as Mr. Read and I were taking the air on horseback, "What think you," said he, "of our making a visit to my country house? you will find Mrs. Read there: I shall be glad to make you acquainted with a woman who is the source of all my



“ happiness. Besides, you will be much pleased with  
 “ a sight of her villa ; I call it her’s because she has  
 “ been at considerable pains to improve it, and in that  
 “ improvement I think she has displayed much taste.  
 “ But you are a connoisseur in this way,” continued he,  
 “ come, and have an opportunity of passing your own  
 “ judgment upon her talents.”

I could have no objection to so agreeable a proposal. I had not before been introduced to Mrs. Read, who seldom came to her town residence, the place where Mr. Read and I were resident, unless when engaged or occupied in making a tour of the island. About an hour’s ride, through a country diversified with vineyards, orange gardens, corn fields, and pasture lands, brought us thither. I was received with an easy civility, the genuine result of true politeness. I would have excused the liberty of being introduced so late in the evening, but Mrs. Read would hear nothing of the sort, and gave me a most cordial welcome.

On the following morning, our first ceremonies being over, I took occasion to say something on the agreeableness of the place and situation, which was such as to strike one at first sight. It was an instance of good taste, which seemed to discover itself in every point,

that Mr. Read had made choice of so beautiful a spot to build on ; where, without being too much exposed, he had the command of a delightful sea and land prospect. But in this consisted all the original advantages of the place. In other respects it was the most barren and desolate spot on the island ; a mere surface of lava on which the perfection of Art was to cross Nature, and requiring more expense to make so bad a site tolerable, than would answer to make a more advantageous one delightful. Certain it is, that the hospitable proprietors have all the merit of their design to themselves, being little beholden to the assistance of Nature. To cultivate a bleak barren scene, and give beauties where Nature seems to have been more than ordinarily sparing of them, was esteemed, by Mrs. and Mr. Read, a sort of voluntary creation, in which the force of the artist's own genius is at full liberty to display itself, and where an enlightened skill may correct the penury of the soil, and produce fruits, flowers, and vegetables, suitable to the varieties of the seasons. However, artificial as the grounds and gardens are, they possess that pleasant simplicity which Nature, or a true lover of Nature, only can give. The interchanges of shade and opening, level and raised ground, garden and pasture, vineyards, and orange trees, are adjusted with great art, so as to relieve and set off each other, and to embrace or exclude the



view of the country or ocean, as either was judged most agreeable in the general plan. And, whilst the eye is occupied with the various forms of interesting objects that present themselves, such as the city and its spires, the harbour and its boats, the road-stead and its shipping, the cultivated country with its fields and villages, and the back ground with its multiplicity of volcanic eruptions; the other senses were as delightfully entertained with the abundant fragrances of natural odours, the warbling music of birds, and the soothing softness of aquatic numbers. In short, I never witnessed a more interesting scene. I was so much engaged by its beauties, that I passed the entire forenoon in rambling from place to place, till the dinner hour insensibly came upon me. In the house, also, which is newly built, a general neatness, usefulness, and elegant simplicity, takes place of operose grandeur and studied magnificence. I passed in it many days of extreme satisfaction, and left it with a strong conviction that, the generous owners are persons of liberal minds, strong sense, and highly cultivated understandings.

Being a lover of natural improvements, I received superior lights and advantages from this visit than I have as yet described. I learned from Mr. Read, than whom no man is better acquainted with the Azores, that nearly

all the improved land around the Ponta Del Gada, and indeed throughout the island, with the exception of such parts of the primitive plain as were not influenced by eruptions and earthquakes, was originally like his grounds before he commenced their improvements ; that is, they presented a rugged superficies of lava, and consisted internally of alternate layers of lava and vegetable earth, successively deposited upon one another, and reaching to a considerable, and often to an unknown, depth. The lava on the surface resembling slate-coloured rock ; in some places as hard as marble ; in others, of the consistence of indurated sand. A difference in the quality of the lava in these respects, arises from difference of situation, elevation, or depression, and exposure to wind, rain, &c. ; but that all the principal improvements were made upon this obdurate substance is as certain as astonishing ; and, as I have made myself master of the means by which so gigantic an undertaking is effected, I shall minutely state the process in my next letter. Repeating here, that it is to my visit to Mr. Read's villa, I am indebted for a detail which may be relied upon for its accuracy and authenticity.



## LETTER XI.

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ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.—MODE OF CULTIVATION, &c.

IN my promised description of the mode of cultivating a St. Michael's farm, I shall avail myself of the method which Mr. Read has pursued; selecting from the practice of others those particulars that are most deserving of notice, and combining them together so as to form a connected narrative.

The farm purchased by Mr. Read, about three years since, for one dollar per acre, consisted, at that time, of two distinct regions; the fertile and the barren: the fertile, ascribed to the decomposition of lava, and the barren, to the lava's being in a vitreous and indurated state. Determined to take advantage of the most extensive and commanding prospect, Mr. Read was compelled to commence his operations upon the barren region of his estate; on a part entirely composed of substances that had been discharged from the adjacent volcanoes in their various eruptions; and which, for the most part, formed a lava entirely naked, rugged, and

desolate, to the most extreme degree. From some calcareous matter, blended with this mass of hard rock, Mr. Read provided himself with limestone, and, with the fragments of lava collected from the surface, blasted from rocks, and excavated from quarries, he built up his house and fenced in his grounds.

From the time that these labors began to effect a change in the character of the territory, an applicable system of agriculture was immediately introduced. The lava is planted with oranges, and set with vines, and the land formed from the decomposition of volcanic substances is sown with Indian corn, small beans, and wheat. As the ground last mentioned yields to the plough, harrow, and all the other instruments of husbandry, I have no occasion to describe the means employed for rendering it prolific ; but, as the lava defies all the ordinary efforts of human industry, I shall be particular in detailing the mode pursued, which gives it an immediate fertility and sudden investigation.

The lava being somewhat cleared by the consumption of stone for the walls, inclosures, and buildings, and the intervening cavities filled up with the redundancy of craggy eminences, and vitreous and friable rubbish, common to all lava, the surface is marked out into



quinc-quinx characters for the more free admission of air to the plants intended to be cultivated. These are oranges and vines, the staple fruits of the island: all others, though growing abundantly, are confined to gardens, as intended only for the use of individual families. The surface of the lava being first regularly traced, holes are wrought in the place of each mark, and the plants inserted in progression as the holes are made. The labor attending this operation is various. Where the lava is shallow and seated on a stratum of vegetable earth, the holes are made with the crow and pick-axe, and the plant is at once placed in a bed where it can rapidly shoot up and extend its fibres. But, where the lava is deep and difficult to be penetrated, the holes are made by blasting the lava with powder; and the plant is set in decomposed lava, or decayed vegetable substances, brought from adjacent places for that particular purpose, and from which it also rapidly shoots up, its roots finding their way into the insinuosities caused by the blasting or other circumstances common to the place. The effect of both operations appears like the effect of magic, and the revolution of one summer produces a change not to be conceived by those who have not witnessed both the practice and the effect. The truth is, the barren lava thus cultivated, is much better adapted to the orange and vine than deep and luxuriant

soils ; for, in such soils, the orange plant would run into head and be subject to destruction by storms, and the vine would run into wood and require espaliers for its support : whereas, in the lava, by the depth of the hole and the consequent parapet around it, which is never entirely filled up, the young orange plant is sheltered from the tempest till it has capacity to resist its force ; and the vine, from the same causes, finds support for its tendrils, and a check to its growth. There are other advantages which result to the plant from this practice, which it is also proper to name. The roots, by running horizontally under the lava, are screened from the violence of the sun ; and, by vegetating in a situation calculated to receive and to retain a necessary proportion of moisture, they are supplied with all the means of giving a vigour to the stock which is never attained in bibulous soils exposed to the action of an intemperate sun. Besides, when the lava is once thus planted, little else remains to be performed for years. The labor of one man is sufficient for the improvement of twenty acres, as nothing more is required than dressing the plants, and renewing the waste of vegetable earth in situations where the roots cannot shoot into a natural stratum of that substance. But, where plantations and vineyards are seated in a rich luxuriant plain, the ground requires the most unremitting industry ; it must be



dressed, weeded, and repeatedly watered ; the vines, too, must be trained upon props, and the orange trees, from the excessive weight of their tops, and the height to which they rise in deep soils, require the shelter of immense walls to preserve the roots from being torn up, and the fruit from falling. It would seem from these facts and arguments, that a lava farm may be made a more productive property than a farm containing rich pasture and arable lands. I have tried this paradox by a minute calculation, and I am fully convinced that where the cultivator has money to clear, inclose, perforate, and plant, his lava, the lava constitutes a superior property to any other ; but, where means are wanting to subdue those obstacles, the plain country is to be preferred, inasmuch only as it is cultivated at less expense. The calculation is obvious. In the first instance, the rich level country is adapted properly for wheat, Indian corn, and beans, or callivances. The price of the beans and wheat is five shillings per bushel, the price of the corn two and sixpence. An acre of the two former will produce forty, and of the latter eighty, bushels. This amounts to ten pounds per acre ; a miserable remuneration for capital and labor. Whereas one acre of orange trees is worth at least one hundred guineas, and of vine forty. Vines are more easily reduced to calculation than oranges. They are not

subject to much variety in growth, or fluctuation in quantity. But orange trees are known to gain, in particular instances, such an extraordinary degree of perfection, as to make an estimate of the value of an acre pass beyond all bounds of belief. You may judge from this circumstance: there are several trees in the island which produce from 40,000 to 60,000 oranges each: say 50,000, and allowing 1000, the usual quantity to a box, and the usual price two dollars and a half per box, the single tree produces the extraordinary sum of thirty-two pounds five shillings. It takes, however, seven years to bring orange plantations to perfection, and three years to render a vineyard productive: therefore, none but a capitalist should embark in such undertakings, as it would be ruinous to a poor man to embark in a speculation so little calculated to meet the exigencies of the day. The lava, notwithstanding, is cultivated, in some few places, by the lowest order of farmers; but their practice is so indigent and unprofitable, that it hardly merits the name of cultivation. They merely plant the vine or the orange in such accidental apertures and interstices as they chance to find in the lava; taking no pains to clear the surface, or to equalize the number of plants to the given space of inclosed soil. Than this practice nothing can be more slovenly: than that of Mr. Read's, and other capitalists of taste and informa-



tion, nothing can be more agreeable to a picturesque eye. The quinc-unx manner of planting, exhibiting straight lines and right angles from every point of view, makes the whole plantation look like a garden, shrubbery, and orchard, and gives it a power over the imagination, which is, perhaps, increased by the ever present conviction, that the delightful scene was once a stream of liquid fire.

Of the expense attending the cultivation of a farm composed of volcanic eruptions, an estimate is not to be made without consulting a variety of considerations. Mr. Read's farm is so disposed, as to become the bed of the matter which was discharged from the mouth of the great volcano, now seen about two miles distant from the back of his house, and has been attended by considerable cost, the lava proving excessively hard, and, for the most part, three feet thick. From this instance no general conclusion can be drawn. And, when the farms consist of volcanic sand and ashes, metallic slag and pumice stone, nothing can be deduced but what arises from the comparative facility of labor, and the disposition in one place to vegetate sooner than another. The following maxima, without being minutely correct, may tend to assist conjecture.—Thick lava, without an intervening stratum of earth, thirty guineas; thin lava,

covering an immediate stratum of earth, twenty guineas ; lava invested with a stratum of earth proper for vegetation, fifteen guineas ; and lava, in an entire state of decomposition, or slightly covered with pumice, ashes, and sand, ten guineas per acre. But, in the purchase of a lava farm, it is necessary to have some instruction or judgment on the subject of lava. For lavas are very different in their consistency and other qualities, and these differences must render the argument on the cost of labor very inconclusive. It is generally understood, that the lava in the S. E. region of the island is softer, and becomes fertile sooner than that of the N. E., which retains such a degree of hardness as to continue nearly altogether sterile, and incapable of yielding to human industry and labor. To assist the judgment, I venture to state how I distinguish good from bad lava. The fertile, or good, is a kind of honeycomb stone, of a grey colour, rough to the touch, and of a moderately fine grain. The sterile, or the bad, is a species of marble, of a dark mixed colour, smooth to the touch, gives sparks with steel, sounds like metal when it is struck, and possesses a grain susceptible of the highest polish.

But, however uncertain and fallacious all general calculations may be on this subject, it is, nevertheless, perfectly true, that three years have scarcely elapsed,



since Mr. Read's farm presented nothing to the view but a waste of lava, in some parts plain, in others rugged, and broken into chasms and cliffs; and that it is at this day covered with the orange and the vine, chequered, for domestic use and local ornament, with the fruits of the northern, and the flowering shrubs of the tropical climates. How much must he enjoy this creation of his own hands! May he long enjoy it!

## LETTER XII.

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ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.—CULTIVATION OF WHEAT,  
BEANS, AND OTHER GRAIN—ADVANTAGES ARISING  
FROM ITS IMPORT INTO GREAT BRITAIN.

I HASTEN to correct an error into which I am suspected to have fallen in my last communication from this place. I allude to the encouragement I appeared to hold out to the cultivation of oranges and vines, in preference to that of corn, pulse, and wheat. As nothing could indicate the shallow politician more than such a preference, I shall here endeavour to make myself appear more reasonable, and to be better understood.

God forbid, that I should encourage the progress of luxury instead of the comforts and necessities of man! All I could have proposed, therefore, can only extend to recommending, that the cultivation of oranges should be encouraged on lava districts, but by no means on lands proper for the growth of wheat, beans, and corn. These are the only true source of plenty. The



wheat-sheaf is revered and considered by all nations as the emblem of a staple commodity. I hope I have assigned no reasons for shewing why it should not be sacred in my estimation. Providence has accorded to this island a superior capacity for multiplying all the necessaries of life ; can I have been so absurd as to have given any motives for reducing or diminishing the number of them ? Can I have asserted ridiculously that the cultivation of oranges stands in competition with the cultivation of corn and wheat ? Certainly not ! Because, when oranges are the produce, the gain, if it can be so called, is limited ; but in growing provisions of an essential kind, a blessing is widely diffused throughout the whole community. The landholders are more certainly paid, the orange crop being subject to various casualties ; the peasantry are employed, the poor fed, and the merchants enriched by exporting the surplus.

This, then, is the essential point which commands recommendation in St. Michael's, and which demands the attention of England. This, too, is the point which originally induced me to hope, that the Azores would hereafter be mixed up and compromised in your interests. Great Britain, though a fertile, is but a small, island, and the price of her provisions so high, that it plunges in want and misery the greater part of the industrious

labouring poor, and also bears painfully hard upon such as have circumscribed incomes, curates, subaltern officers, soldiers, widows, and orphans. I could point out the true cause of an exorbitant price which, in its pernicious effects, operates as a famine or a scarcity, but it is here no part of my province: it is my duty and wish merely to point out the means of plenty; and, in order to lay the foundation of that blessing, I do most earnestly recommend a closer union with these islands, at the same time I would recommend to the islanders that enlarged system of agriculture which will enable them to meet all the demands of your markets.

The importance of this union to the English nation is so obvious, that it surely needs no further explanation: Assume the protection of the Azores, and, by promoting Azorean industry, you will insure a fountain of abundance for your own country.

It is well known, that immense sums of money have, for some years past, been sent into France, and into the Baltic, for corn, which you might be supplied with from hence, and this without enriching an enemy against whose revenue you ought rather to contend. But, surely, it requires no argument to be convinced, that you ought to take from countries under your protection whatever



they can supply you with, because such countries take your commodities in return ; or, even if they do not, whatever they get ultimately centers in the superior kingdom.

I do not want leisure to study, and I hope I am not without capacity to understand your domestic politics ; and yet, I must confess, I do not comprehend them.

Occupied for a long time with a foreign war, and blinded, at the same time, by the most inveterate prejudice, England does not appear to discern, that the power of France has destroyed the continental balance, and shut her out from all those ports which contained her principal sources of provisions. Occupied in humbling the pride of France, she has run herself into the most imminent danger ; a more imminent danger than her history can furnish any other instance of ; that of having the necessaries of life bearing a value above the price of labor, while the price of labor, with the value of the necessaries of life, are deemed objects of inferior consideration to schemes of conquest and projects of dominion.—The price of wheaten flour is daily rising in England. Shut out from the corn countries of the continent, and said to be on the eve of war with America,

I am at a loss to think where you are to look for bread.

Influenced by these considerations, I have been particular in my investigations, and I am authorized to state, that this island and its tributary, St. Mary's, if pushed to the extent of their capacity, would serve as an ample GRANARY for ENGLAND, and compel the price of her markets to fall to a level with labor, and the other general means of the people.



### LETTER XIII.

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ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.—PICTURESQUE VIEW OF A  
TOUR MADE THROUGH THE ISLAND.

MY various excursions in this very interesting Island, have made so forcible an impression on my mind, that I scarcely can find words to describe them, as I think, sufficiently; or models in ancient or modern Travels to reach their similitude. The novelty of the scenery, and the uncommon character of the occurrences, bringing them before the eye as objects of the greatest singularity and admiration. I shall confine myself to four of the most remarkable of those excursions; namely, firstly, from hence to the Furnas; secondly, from the Furnas to Ribeira Grande; thirdly, from Ribeira Grande to the Caldeiras in the Mountains; and, fourthly, from the Caldeiras to the Valley of the Seven Cities, and the Grand and Azure Lakes.

My determination with regard to visiting the Furnas, was no sooner made public, than I was accosted by a person who was happy to engage in my service as a

guide, and who hired me two asses for the journey; the one for my provisions, the other to ride on. I proposed hiring a third for this person, but he declined the offer, and preferred walking, although he well knew that the route lay over flinty lava, sharp scoriæ, and volcanic sand. I was advised to take asses, the roads being considered too rugged and abundant in precipices to be safe for horses. Experience amply justified the counsel of my friends; I found the asses not only acquainted with the safest track, but that they could be depended upon in situations, and under circumstances in which a horse would almost inevitably fail, and cost the rider his life. Thus mounted, and followed by the guide, hooting and goading the beasts along, and joyously singing songs of praise to St. Antonio for the good fortune of being so well employed, I took the high road of the Rosto de Cam, and passing through the towns of Alagoa and Agoa de Pao, arrived at Villa Franca on the evening of my first day's journey, and which occupied the time of four hours; being equal to a distance of about twelve English miles.

During the progress of this journey I passed through three distinct regions, each of which presented changes of scene and novelty in appearance too multitudinous to be described; but whose outline may be resolved into



irregular lava, interspersed with vineyards and orange gardens, for the first three miles ; rich corn and pasture grounds for the next five ; and hills and mountains, difficult and perilous, for the remainder. But, should the tide be out, it is possible to travel along the shore, although it requires much resolution to descend, and afterwards much strength of mind to ride under, the stupendous, and often overhanging, cliffs, that resist the unremitting fury of the ocean.

The latter part of the internal road lies over old lavas and the mouths of extinguished volcanoes, many of which are the seats of hamlets and villas, or converted into corn fields, vineyards, and orange gardens. The lava from these volcanoes flowed for the most part towards the sea, and forms a component part in the base of the cliffs.—The cliffs vary in height from three hundred to one thousand feet ; and, in figure, from a pointed promontory to flat and perpendicular sides, crowded with conical and hemispherical points, according to the nature of the vicissitudes to which they owe their formation. They are covered with a rich verdure and beautiful shrubs. There is but one exception to this general feature of natural fertility ; that is, the mountain called PICO DO FOGO, (*Peak of Fire*,) which derives this name from the tinge of fiery color which its summit

exhibits, and which was produced by an eruption of iron ore, the cinders and ashes of which are not as yet changed or modified by external circumstances, although one hundred years have elapsed since the terrific event.

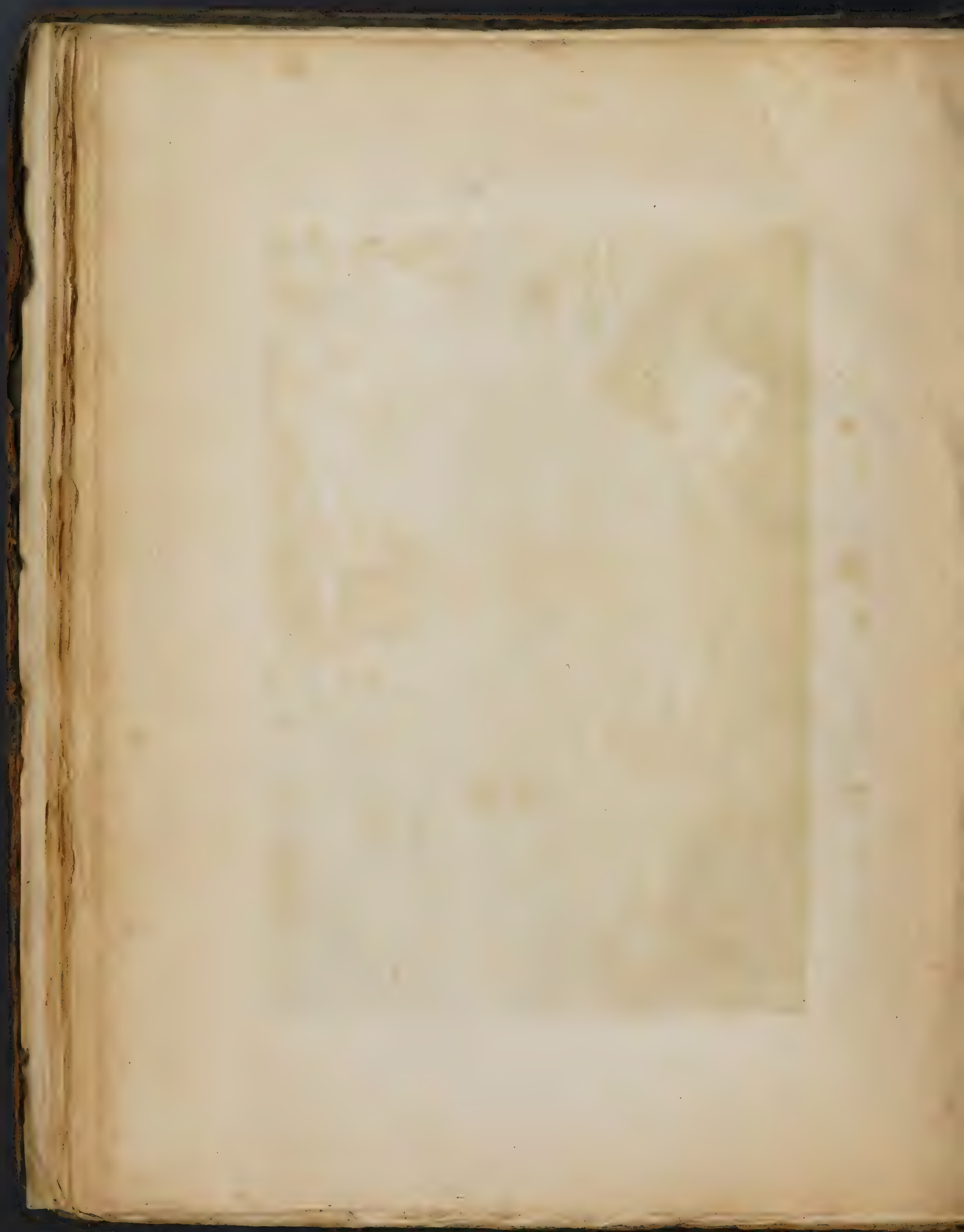
On my arrival at Villa Franca, I readily perceived that it is an ancient town, founded on lava, and partly destroyed by earthquakes, particularly by one dreadful visitation of this nature which occurred at the same time that the Pico do Fogo was discharging its destructive torrents of metallic fire. The vertex of the volcano which constituted the original foundations of the town, ports, and harbour, is seen at about two miles distant, and evidences of the ruinous earthquake that destroyed those objects every where abound. Indeed so strong are the testimonies, that, at low water, the ruins of the ancient harbour are visible; and, from the immense chasms which surround the town, it appears that the sea did not gain upon the town, but that the scite of the town and a large tract of adjoining and connected land were forced forward upon the sea. Previously to this dreadful eruption the population of Villa Franca exceeded that of all the united towns of the Azores. She also ranked as the capital, and a free city, enjoying many immunities. But that dreadful catastrophe swallowed up three thousand of her citizens, annihilated her





Copper-plate

*View of Wells, France, and Harbours formed by volcanic Conflagration.*





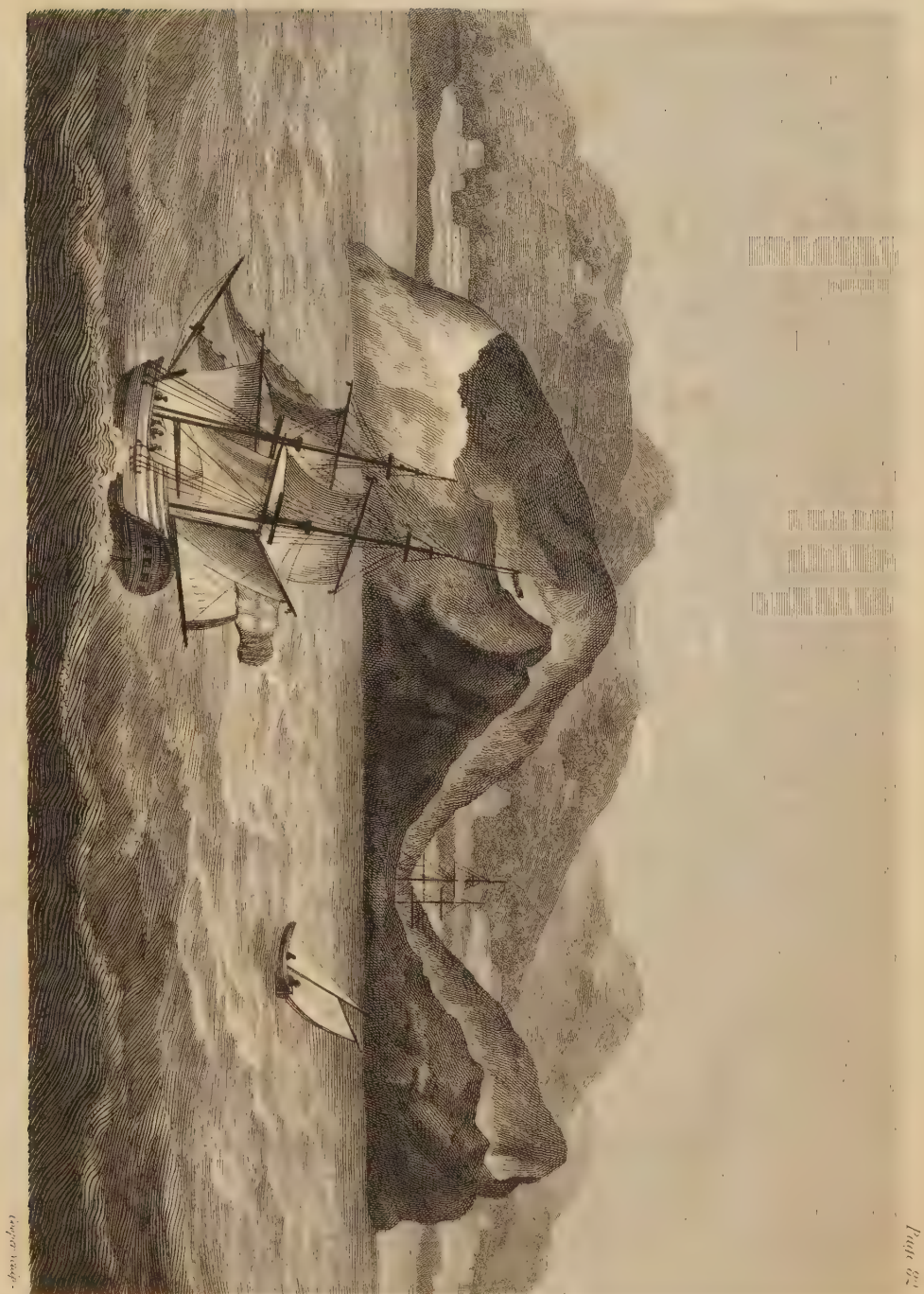
harbour and her commerce, and blotted out all her future hopes and prospects of success. The town, now thinly inhabited, with about two thousand souls, is under the conduct of a chief magistrate and a judge; has a large nunnery, two convents, and a parish church, and sends two-thirds of the productions of its vicinity to Ponta del Gada for exportation. Those productions consist of oranges, wine, wheat, small pulse, and Indian corn. All of which are conveyed by land, on asses, or by water, in shallops, according to the exigency of the demand and the reigning character of the winds and weather.

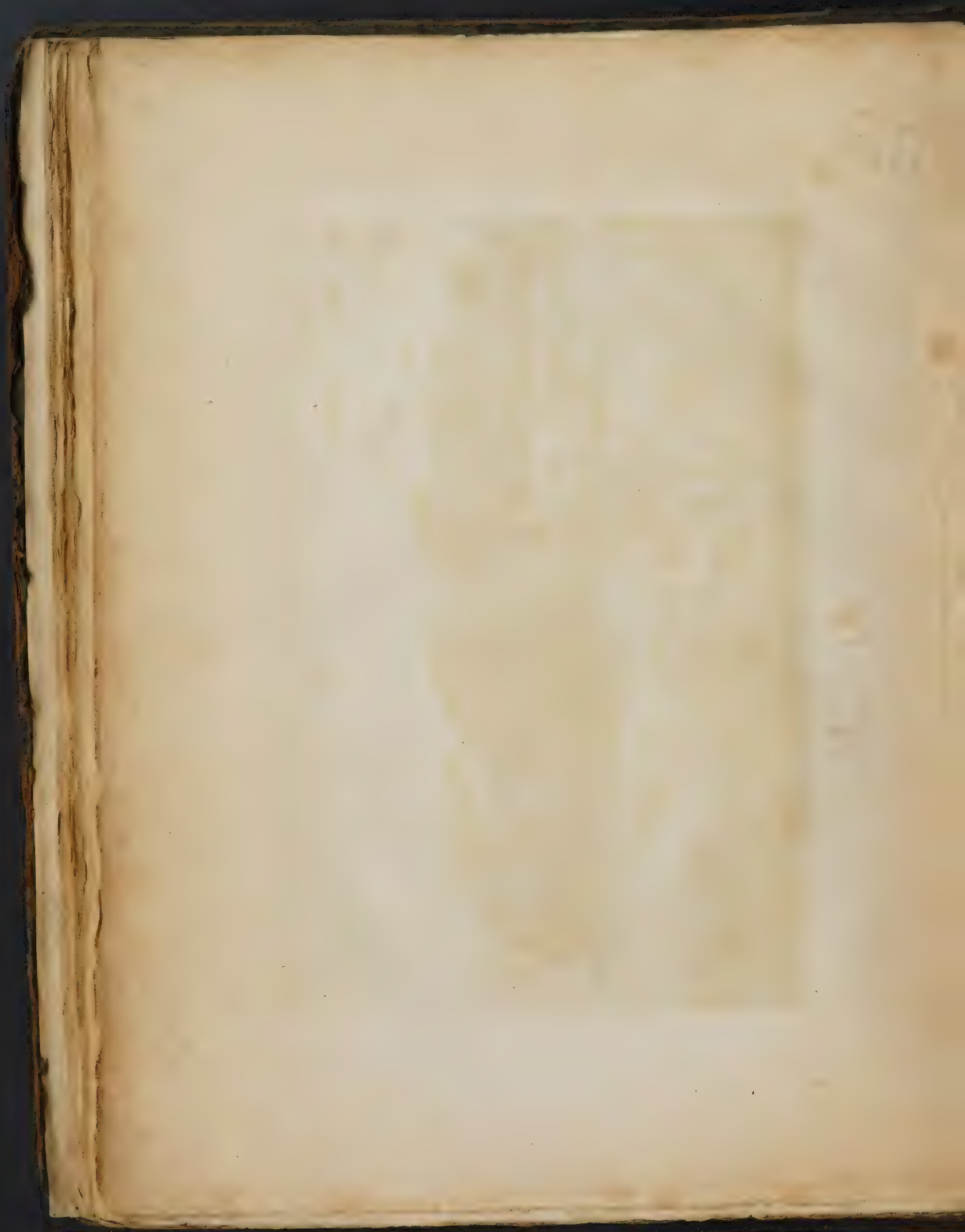
But the most remarkable subject relative to Villa Franca is the Porto do Ilheo, which remains to be described. In ancient times there stood an island in the sea, at about three quarters of a mile distant from the former harbour, and there is abundant reason for conjecture, that this island was originally a high plain, inasmuch as the base is composed of primitive substances, and its present mountainous circumference entirely formed of volcanic strata, varying with the nature of the eruptions, and modified by intervening time and the influences of sun and air. In the process of ages, it would appear, that a vertex had opened which discharged dreadful torrents of lava, and showers of

cinders and sand from the center of the plain, and that those conflagrations after raising the island to an elevation of two thousand feet above the level of the sea, and excavating all its mineral and other contents, were suddenly extinguished by the introduction of the sea into the vertex through an aperture formed by a submarine explosion, or by the pressure of the waters on a weak point of the excavated bed. The introduction of this element was, however, attended with a very extraordinary and beneficial effect. It caused so sudden an explosion as to rend asunder the side of the vertex, from the summit to seven feet below the ordinary water mark, and of breadth just sufficient to admit a vessel of about thirty feet in the beam. This vertex, since that memorable epoch, forms a port or harbour, to which vessels of easy draught resort, both in case of distress and for the purpose of careening and re-fitting. Not more than four such vessels can lie with safety in this volcanic harbour; but it has afforded shelter to six at a time, and has saved the crews of upwards of one hundred ships which have run into the bason, from time to time, when every other hope of preservation was abandoned and lost.—The entrance is from the N. E., but as the S. E. wind throws in a heavy swell over a part of the bank of the vertex, vessels should not remain in the bason during this wind. In case they do, they



*View of Porto de San.*







must be sculled, as the only way to save them. It is generally understood, that the shelter is only good in from south to westerly gales. The greatest depth is eighteen feet; and the form, similar to all craters, is completely circular. Close to the bason is a towering pyramid or perpendicular rock, the foundations of which are not to be fathomed in the great abyss, although the distance is not more than forty yards from the island from which it was originally torn. The best point of view for seeing the vertex or bason, is from the high western bank, or from the sea in the S. E. direction. From this latter point, the vessel appears placed on a valley surrounded by high mountains, and from the first she is seen riding in a bason perfectly circular; not even interrupted by the mouth of the entrance, which, by bending to the East is lost to the eye of the spectator. I would not, for my individual amusement, wish for a storm; but as storms, whether wished for or not, will sometimes happen, I may say, without violation of humanity, I should willingly look upon them from the summit of this vertex, and enjoy the magic scene of seeing a vessel suddenly enter and find security in a place once the theatre of the most dreadful and terrific operations ever exhibited by the destructive agents of Nature.

## LETTER XIV.

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THE PORTO DO ILHEO OF VILLA FRANCA. REMARKS  
ON THE ORIGINAL FORMATION OF THE ISLANDS—  
ON VOLCANOES, EARTHQUAKES, &c.

I FEEL considerable encouragement to proceed in this correspondence, both from the attention with which you distinguish it, and from a reasonable confidence that you appreciate the difficulties to which a continuation of it exposes me. But, have the goodness to consider, that it is not with a writer as it is with an artist. Guided by genius, a Titian or an Angelo can, at one flight, reach the summit of his art; but, whatever capacity you may allow to an investigator of Nature, still, in the wastes of science, he can only advance step by step. In his way he finds absurdities to engage, and prejudices to conquer, which require faculties not always at command, and circumstances of felicity perhaps not always to be enjoyed. The principal obstructions to this correspondence arise from the singularity of the subjects and the novelty of opinion which I am compelled to offer in their description. For



instance, having in my last attributed the formation of the Porto do Ilheo to volcanic eruptions, and the power of earthquakes, excited by the introduction of water into the fiery region of the volcano, I consider it necessary to state the appearances on which I establish such opinion.



Whatever may have been the primitive figure of the Porto do Ilheo, there can be no doubt but that this figure was changed through the agency of fire, which made it assume a kind of obtuse truncated cone, terminating in a circular vertex. This conviction is impressed by the volcanic remains which constitute the walls of the truncated cone of the vertex, and by the primitive substances which compose the base upon which that cone stands elevated. That it vomited flames under this figure for a number of ages is also certain, and why, and from what causes it ceased to burn, is the only question that solicits the naturalist's investigation. That the

shock of an earthquake, taking its origin from the violent expansion of subterraneous air, and occasioned by the sudden action of water on mineral fire, was the cause of the cessation cannot be disputed ; therefore the difficulty contracts its circle, and appears to be merely this :— Whether the water gained access to the caverns of liquid fire, by the gradual waste of the truncated cone from the flowing of the lava in one particular direction, or whether it gained access through the falling in of the vaults of such caverns, lying as they do immediately under the immensity of the ocean. There is no difficulty in solving these questions. The most ordinary observer is competent to their solution. For the most ordinary observer must perceive, that the sides of the opening in the cone, above the mouth, through which the water finds an entrance, do not present an undulating surface, such as is produced by the gradual flow of lava and the constant attrition of waters, but he instantly perceives that they exhibit that rugged and broken appearance, and those mutual protrusions and indentions which can only arise from an earthquake, or from some sudden and violent convulsion of nature.

I might here, with propriety, end this disquisition and proceed with the detail of my excursion ; but, as I have advanced the hypothesis of earthquakes produced



through the agency of water, it may not be superfluous here to show the principles which direct my determination. To expose this theory, it will be sufficient to observe, that the air of the subterraneous caverns under the Porto do Ilheo, being lighter than the element which pressed upon it, and more elastic than the atmosphere encompassing the earth, it was for ever searching for the means of rising to a height on which the air was of the same specific gravity with itself. In this situation it floated till it became suddenly rarefied and expanded by the violent effervescence occasioned by the bursting in of the waters upon the mineral and metallic fires previously burning in the caves. Thus rarefied and expanded by effervescence, and with its specific gravity lessened, and the diminution of its weight proportioned to the effervescence, the whole mass above it was compelled to yield to this dilated power, and to suffer it to ascend to an atmosphere of the same specific gravity with itself. In this state of increased inflammability and dilatation, it naturally took the direction or current of the vertex in the centre of the island, and finding the cone of this vertex too contracted for its velocity and volume, it went off with a terrible explosion, agitating the sea, and rending the cone of the vertex from its summit to its base. And also separating the object called the pyramid, which I have before mentioned,

from the body of the island to which it was attached. This tremendous concussion, however, produced the beneficial effect of forming a harbour which has since saved many hundred lives; for it opened an entrance into the vertex from the ocean, and formed a bason into which there passes not a winter that vessels do not run for succour, and when every other hope is absolutely lost.

Before I conclude this subject I think it proper to inform you, that the most sagacious philosophers of these islands have always propagated the opinion, that all the islands of the Azores have arisen out of the sea, and owe their origin to subterraneous eruptions. I am not of this opinion, because I know that the island of St. Mary, in particular, is entirely destitute of volcanic remains, and that it possesses a pure clay, employed by potters with great success.

I must now describe a surprising phenomenon, in present action, which gives considerable countenance to the opinion I have hazarded.

The phenomenon is this.—For several weeks past the people of Ginetes and Varzeas, and Candelaria (at the western end of the island), had been much alarmed by



repeated convulsions of the earth, which had rendered their houses unsafe, and induced them to pass the night in temporary huts, raised in their gardens, as is usual on such occasions. It was reported, at this time, that a volcano had broken out upon the *Pico das Camarinhas*; but on Saturday, the 1st of February, 1811, the public attention was turned from the land to the sea, from which a tremendous volume of smoke was seen to issue and to rise, though apparently thick and dense, to an extraordinary height above the first region of the atmosphere. At intervals a dark muddy substance was hove up to ten, and sometimes to twenty, fathom. No flame was visible during the day; it was at night that the phenomenon filled the mind with the most terrific and sublime sensations: it was at night that the awful contest between two of the grand elements of nature struck the senses with the most unmingled wonder and admiration. The flame did not always ascend very high; perhaps not more than twenty feet above the surface of the sea: but at times of remoter intervals, the fire accompanied the smoke to a prodigious height, carrying up with it substances resembling pieces of stone or metal. An explosion on the fifth day was far more tremendous than any former one. The fire ascended like a host of sky-rockets, to an immense height, and the burning fluid, or lava, was not extinguished till it plunged again into the ocean. The distance

from the shore is about a mile and a half, and since the eruption has in some degree subsided, the spot appears like a rock under water, with the sea breaking furiously over it. From the shore of Genetes it is distant, west, about a mile and a half.

The best informed fishermen of the Ginetes coast say there were soundings on the spot in eighty fathoms water; at present no fact of this nature can be ascertained; the place being held too awful and dangerous to be approached. This, however, is certain, that the crown of the vertex of the volcano, which appears to be about two hundred yards in circumference, is now within a few feet of the surface of the sea, and that it will shortly rise above the surface, and assume, in the course of ages, the extent and character of an island.

You may well believe, that all those who attribute the existence of the Western Islands to volcanic eruptions, readily consider this recent event as the strongest testimony of the justice of their opinions. Indeed, I must myself allow, that it is a powerful datum for them to argue upon; but, as I have already assigned my motives for maintaining that the average level, or basis of each island, is composed of primitive substances, I necessarily continue in the belief that they all took their



existence at the first creation, and are as old as the globe itself. And if I live to see this volcano rise and extend above the sea, it will not reform my judgment, because I shall every day expect to see it again buried in the bowels of the ocean. While it remains under the water, an effervescence of its fiery contents will be fed by the water, which it intermittingly receives, but so soon as that source of inflammability fails, the cone of the vertex will fall in, and the sea by gaining a complete domination over the volcano, will cause a tremendous earthquake, and drive the subterraneous flames to kindle conflagration in caverns more remote, and to create eruptions in latitudes more distant. For my own part, I look upon the opening of this volcano in the sea as the most auspicious and providential occurrence that could have happened to this island. It proves, also, my former assertion, that the subterraneous conflagration is travelling to the westward, and that in a short time we shall be relieved from all apprehensions of volcanoes and earthquakes. I now conclude this detail, and shall resume my excursion to-morrow.

## LETTER XV.

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### TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.

APPREHENDING that you have already had enough about the theory of volcanic eruptions, I hasten to inform you, that on leaving Villa Franca, and pursuing my route to the Furnas, I passed over about five miles of a most delightful country, the origin of which could not be traced to the expansive effort of the ignited matter originally contained within the great abyss of the island. This conviction gave it a character of sobriety extremely pleasing to the senses, and assisted to increase the effect of the picturesque beauties which presented themselves in every point of view. To the left of this enchanting road, on arriving at the hamlet of Saint Joam, is to be seen the uncultivated mountains bounding the Alagoa Lake; to the right, is to be seen the beautiful village of Lugar da Ponta, the Porto do Ilheo, in the sea, and Villa Franca on the coast; and, in front, extends the Caminho das Furnas, a country more various in its aspect and productions than any other known to me upon the earth. Corn, pulse,



oranges, lemons, chesnuts, grapes, walnuts, and vegetables of every description, covered the ground with a mellow effulgence which was happily relieved by the verdure of pasture, and the numerous gradations of kindred shades in aromatic plants, shrubs, and trees. This peculiar appearance principally arose from the maturity and decay of many of the vegetable productions of the earth ; which, the season being autumn, began to assume the latter hue, and to interpose it in large and strong contrasts among the other objects of the landscape, dignified with perpetual verdure. Thus I had the advantage of seeing this part of the country, in addition to its permanent inequalities, combine the variegated prospect of verdant pastures, fruitful gardens, purple vineyards, and flowered fields, than which view one cannot easily imagine another more impressive or interesting. Indeed it is impossible for the pencil to paint, much less for the pen to describe, the diversity, the almost infinite diversity, which the multitudinous and chequered scenes of the Caminha das Furnas displays in the fall of the year. Even the diversity of an orange tree is very considerable ; bearing fruit, verdure, and flowers, of various complexions and shades, at one and the same time. But the season, as I observed, was highly favorable to the scenery during my journey. The annual process of vegetation was nearly finished ; Nature

had exhausted her productive energies, and, like a munificent mother, was pouring her manifold blessings into the arms of her children, eager to receive them. The horn of plenty was flowing for the supply of their necessities. The time of my observation was also fortunate. The sun was but just diffusing his refulgent beams over the fruitful land, and the villagers and peasants, who lived by the sweat of their brow, were collecting to pursue their respective functions. Accordingly, some were engaged in cutting the corn, and some in binding the sheaves; some were employed in the sunny vineyard, and others in the shade of the orange grove; here the brawny stripling was driving his goats to market, and there the canorous damsel was preparing the fibrous plant, which she was afterwards to spin for her own benefit and the benefit of her country. The genius of the former appeared to exert itself with uncommon fervor and felicity; like a vital principle it descended to his sons and his daughters, his man servants, and his maid servants, the cattle and the stranger within his gates. The whole population was animated by the spirit of industry; every one was active as the busy insect proposed by the Royal Moralist as a pattern and reproof to the ignominious sluggard. All was industrious—*save one*.

The individual last alluded to accosted me between



Saint Joam and the foot of the mountain leading to the Furnas. This being passed a life totally inactive: he was one of those links in the chain of society, whose labors never improve the country in which they live, nor whose example ever benefit the people amongst whom they reside. This man was, in short, a mendicant friar, whose industry was impeded by his gown, and whose faculties were perverted by priestcraft. I conversed much and harshly with him. I am sorry for it. His manners were gentle, his intentions pure. I should have temporized with him. I should have censured the institution not the man. I gave him a trifle, however, but in a manner so ungracious that he left me disappointed and disturbed. This is not digression, it is instruction from an event. And, as events lead us to experience, and experience to improvement, they should be recorded by the traveller as they occur on his road.

It was mid-day before I began to ascend the mountain. The volcanic sand, of which the road appeared composed, reflected a suffocating heat, and the sun darted his rays with so much power, that I became quite impatient and oppressed. Thus I labored on till I lost sight of the cultivated country, and had nothing to behold but the unbounded surface of the sea and a country

with as few features of civilization as it possessed for the first century after the flood. No sound was heard, save that of the grasshopper amidst the herbage. Nothing living was to be seen but the wild pigeon and the dove. Weary as I was, I examined every cave and craggy hollow that I saw ; and still, as I made my way over the rugged rocks, trod along the narrow and craggy shelves, or mounted up the steep acclivities of these mountainous regions, I searched all with equal attention, but perceived nothing which might cause me to imagine that aught of human kind dwelt, or ever visited, the places I explored. Nevertheless, I proceeded forward, and persevered in my toilsome and tedious route, although amid rocks, up steepy ascents, and along a continued range of sharp-pointed crags, with my progress perpetually retarded by almost inaccessible acclivities and rocky ledges, scarce rendering foot-hold to the beast on which I occasionally rode. Slow and cautious as the sluggish snail in its movements was this poor beast and myself as I proceeded. Sometimes a large precipitous cliff opposed its vast front, and appeared to deny a passage : at other times immense chasms of prodigious depth presented themselves at my feet. In short, whichever way I turned, difficulties innumerable still sprung up before me ; soon as one



obstacle was surmounted, another appeared to exhaust my fortitude, or to exercise my patience. Faint and exhausted with incessant labor and some apprehension, you may conceive the extent of my joy when I gained the summit of the last and the highest mountain of my intended excursion. Seized with a pious pleasure, I increased my pace, and inhaled, as the greatest luxury, a most refreshing breeze. Indeed this delightful summit afforded, at once, a prospect of all that could regale every sense. Tufted trees, inclosing verdant spots, watered by pure and gelid streams; and the wild vine, twined in rich clusters with the myrtle, growing in beds of aromatic vegetables. The distant prospect itself is grand beyond all conception! To the S. E. the island of St. Mary in the midst of the ocean; to the N. W. the ocean lost in its own vast expanse, and all around and under the feet, the devastation of earthquakes, the exhibition of innumerable volcanoes, and the apparent refuse and ruin of the world. 'Twas wonderful! 'Tis a prospect that fills the mind with the most astonishing sensations. I might have said divine, for I could not resist pouring forth my thanksgiving and sacrifice to God, for granting me permission to explore the most mysterious and incomprehensible portion of all the works of his creation.

This magnificent summit conducted me to a scene of a very different nature. It led me to the verge of its northern descent: to a situation from which I could view the most picturesque objects under the most extraordinary circumstances of beauty and terror. The most interesting of these objects is an azure lake, which lies so far beneath the mountains that surround it, that it always enjoys the serenity of a calm, and is so distant from the clouds that they seldom obscure the resplendency of its surface. Bearing the appearance of a mirror of immense circumference, it also resembled such a mirror in its effects and purposes. Surrounded by a combination of great and beautiful objects, it reflected them in so grand, so solemn, and so splendid, a manner, that they produced in the mind a sort of sympathetic calm, which spread a mild complacency over the breast; and created a tranquil pause of mental operation, which may be felt but cannot be delineated. The descent, however, to this lovely scene, was not so long, but it was much more rapid and dangerous than the ascent; it unnerved and wearied me with extreme toil. It was closed on every side with rugged precipices of dark and naked rock, broken into vast chasms; dark cliffs, whose shelving pinnacles were clothed with hardy shrubs; and projecting crags, shagged with bushes and brambles, and



venerable with the remains of blasted and decayed trees. But the principal dangers of the road are to be attributed to the local deluges and whirlwinds to which its upper region is subject, and which, like the vortices of the Andes, tear up every thing on which they fasten, and carry off the surface of every thing over which they sweep. On arriving in the valley that led to the lake, my mind recovered its tone, and I felt a new pleasure in examining more minutely the several picturesque components which formed it. The first impression made on the imagination and judgment is, that the scene, notwithstanding all its beauty and splendor, takes its origin from the wild uproar and confusion of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The valley, which is surrounded by an immense amphitheatre of mountains, may be divided into two parts resembling the figure of eight with a passage through the center about one quarter of a mile broad. This contraction is caused by the approach of the mountains in the centre, and the dilatation of the valley at either end. The first part of the valley is formed like a punch bowl, and is perfectly dry and devoid of water ; but, on being inspected, evidently appears to have been the recent seat of water, and on passing through the narrow passage, there is abundant testimony, that its waters flowed into the

other portion of the valley and formed the lake which I have named with so much enthusiasm, and first saw with so much delight.

I have not leisure, at present, to enter into the detail this interesting subject merits: I therefore reserve it for my next.



## LETTER XVI.

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### TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.

I NOW again invite your attention to the subject which I had not leisure to explain sufficiently in my last letter.

In accompanying me through it, I must once more express my hope that you will not expect a style to admire or a composition to applaud; these are endowments which the traveller seldom has leisure to cultivate, nor opportunities to attain: I aim, therefore, at nothing above simplicity and truth, and shall even divest my subject of such technical terms as may not be universally understood.

Thus, then, I hasten to re-open that scene so lately closed—a scene which displays, in all magnificence, the the wonderful greatness and wisdom of God in the formation of this extraordinary island.

Having shewn that the valley leading to the lake was,

at no very remote period, the bed of a lake, whose waters found a truer level, from some phenomenon in the power of nature only to produce, I shall here expose a few of the arguments which induced me to hazard the assertion. The valley has a great quantity of combustible substance spread over its surface, with a species of pebbles, formed of lava, and rounded and polished by the constant attrition caused by the undulation of water. These pebbles, when held in the flame of a candle, emit a sulphurous smell, and yield a smoke of an intolerable stench; they have, also, this extraordinary property, that by burning they lose only their weight, and not any thing whatever of their bulk. Hence it is sufficiently evident, that the pebbles are volcanic; and that, as their form and polish can only be attributed to the action of water, it is equally evident, that the valley at one time sustained a volcanic mountain, and became a lake when the mountain fell into those subterraneous caverns which were formed by the continued waste of their volcanic ingredients. It may, also, be reasonably conjectured, that the falling in of the mountain was occasioned by an earthquake, produced by the introduction of water, by some unknown agency, into the fiery regions and recesses of the crater; and that the water, gaining a domination over the fire, formed the lake which existed in the valley I have named. On passing forward to the real lake, and sur-



veying it with attention, I found evidence to prove that it, also, was the site of a volcanic mountain, which, submerging at a period far remote from the submersion of the mountain I have described, and submerging still lower by several yards, drew off the waters from the original lake, and afforded the means of becoming a valley, beautiful as can possibly be conceived, although in an infant state of vegetation, and not, as yet, embellished by the hand of man.

The evidence which proves the present lake to have been formed by the submersion of a volcanic mountain, exists in the combustible sand, which composes its bed, and the pebbles and stones which are subject to the action of its waters. Some of the latter are vitrified scoriæ, spongy, light, and brittle; and some cellular lava, reflecting from many parts a metallic lustre, and abounding in a sulphurous smell. These pebbles and lavatic stones, unlike those in the adjacent valley, are not considerably wasted by attrition, but they have lost much of their asperities, and will no doubt, in time, yield to the unremitting action of the water. The lake is limpid and clear, and abounds in fish of many species, particularly of the gold and silver kind, all of which have been introduced into it by the American Consul, a gentleman residing in the Valley of the Furnas.

Leaving this extraordinary scene, I had to ascend, with much fatigue and difficulty, another steep and perilous mountain. The descent to the vale in which the Furnas is situated is almost impassable. A portion of the road had recently fallen in, and the hollow sound of much of the remainder, was a melancholy indication, that in a few years the Furnas cannot be approached from the side of Villa Franca. The evening had advanced upon me before I came in sight of the valley in which the village of the Furnas is delightfully situated.

Reposing for a moment on the overhanging brow of a lofty rock, I looked around, and with admiration of the wild beauty of the prospect. It was closed on every side with immense mountains, from the foot of one of which appeared an impetuous torrent, dashing and foaming over broken rocks, from one precipice to another; it swiftly darted over its precipitous channel, alternately appearing and disappearing as it wound its rapid course among the rocks from whose summits many trees hung drooping over the torrent. In the midst of the valley was the village of the Furnas. The cottages had a sweet effect, and their unbroken solitude and lone situation inspired a solemn awe, and rendered the bold effect and rugged features of the scenery more interesting. The church, the monastery, and other testimonies of civiliza-



tion and industry, formed a striking contrast to the vast and savage amphitheatre of mountains, by which they are encircled. The descent to this village is very abrupt, as I before observed, for about a mile.

On entering the village I was surrounded by the peasantry, who offered me the accommodation of their huts; but, as I had an order from the American Consul to occupy his hospitable house, I declined their kind importunity, and would have retired to rest so soon as I possibly could. In this intention, however, I met with an amiable interruption: the worthy villagers waited upon me with offers of eggs, bread, poultry and wine. Generous in every thing, they would have given me the little aliment and drink which they themselves scantily, but faithfully, received from the hands of nature. Indeed, the simplicity of their manners, the civility and gentleness of their carriage, and their hospitality to me, gained them instantly my esteem. To this I shall only add, that of all the distant countries I have visited, and amid all the extraordinary circumstances which have characterized my various expeditions, no people gained so rapidly upon me as the inhabitants of the beautiful valley of the Furnas, among whom the golden age seemed realized, and who have as yet deviated but little from the simple institutes of nature. I detained two of their principals

and their pastor to supper, but had to regret this act of civility, as their whole conversation turned on the frightful phenomena to which the place was subject; such as the sudden appearance of ignited matter; the falling in of mountains; the submersion of vales; the appearance and disappearance of waters; and the frequent and violent tremulation of the earth. Nor was the impression of this conversation to be effaced during the remainder of the night; for I no sooner laid down to repose, than I imagined that I heard the fiery tide rushing through the caverns beneath me with unremitting noise, overwhelming the soul with too much terror or admiration to admit the idea of sleep. The very floor of my room seemed to exhale vapours having the odour of sulphur, and every other circumstance presented the picture of Tartarus to the imagination, leading the mind to inquire whether the body was not reposing immediately over a region of eternal flames. Lest you should partake in these gloomy apprehensions, I conclude this letter, and only repeat the assurance of my &c. &c.



## LETTER XVII.

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ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.—BATHS OF THE FURNAS—  
RED RIVER—THE WHIRLPOOL.

THE appearance of morning, after the anxious night described in my last, seemed to portend a sultry day ; and, as I was by no means recovered from the fatigues of my journey from Villa Franca, I resolved not to extend my excursion for a short time, but to amuse myself in the gardens of my friend, the consul, which were improved in a manner that evinced considerable judgment and taste. I was somewhat diverted from this intention by the entrance of the Padre, guardian of the monastery, who requested my company to breakfast, and to pass the day under the auspices of his house. I have an instinctive antipathy to pampered priests, but as the features of this reverend Padre shone with the polish of benevolence, as well as luxury, I cheerfully followed him to his convent. This is a handsome edifice, built of lava, surrounded by gardens and

groves, and bearing every appearance of affording its peaceable inmates an abundant and happy life. They amount to twelve or thirteen, are of the order of St. Francis, and, though mendicants by profession, they possess an independence and hospitality that are beautiful features of their character, and form a strong contrast with the avariciousness and servile existence of the continental Portuguese. Their only employment appears to be to wander about their lovely gardens, which abound with the most delicious fruit and odoriferous flowers, or to sit under the broad walnut tree and listen to the music of the birds, the harmony of whose melodious throats is increased by an echo reflected from the cave of an adjacent hall. Perhaps the peaceable and contented disposition of the brotherhood is the natural result of a long residence in a portion of the country abounding in so rich an assemblage of rural images. Lofty hills, covered with verdure, clear streams, winding through the beautiful valley; trees produced without culture, here straggling and single, and there crowding into groves and bowers, must of necessity be favorable to romantic leisure, and to monastic enjoyments. Under this aspect we may consider the monks of the Furnas as supremely happy; for they have chosen a region distinguished by many charming varieties of rural scenery, and which, whether we consider the face of the valley,



or the genius which it inspires, may properly enough be termed the *ARCADIA* of the *AZORES*.

As it is matter of surprize, notwithstanding the beauty of the valley, why a convent and a village should have been established in a place so extremely difficult of access, it is here proper to state, what I learnt from my reverend Padre and his companions, that the village was built for the purpose of accommodating the sick who came to drink of, and bathe in, the waters of the Furnas; and that the convent was erected with a view to the reception of those monks whose constitutions were impaired either by study or by indulgence. There were a few convalescent monks, of this description, at our breakfast party; and, on rambling about the village during the remainder of the day, I had the satisfaction to meet several ladies and gentlemen of the island, who had drank the waters but a few weeks, and who spoke highly of their extraordinary qualities and properties. I shall hereafter enlarge on this subject: and may now remark that, as all the beauty as well as all the infirmity of the island resorts to the Furnas, it is the only proper theatre for seeing the female Portuguese to any advantage: it being the only place where they cast off a studied reserve, or where they are suffered, by their husbands and fathers, to appear in public walks, and

sometimes to go unveiled. This indulgence arises from the peculiar genius of the place, as we see in the watering places of England, the pride and formality which poison city life, laid aside, and the manners and principles which characterize social beings, fondly taken up and universally adopted. Till my visit to the Furnas, I never saw the better order of the St. Michael's females to any advantage—perhaps never in their real character: whereas, on the first day of my visit to the waters, I was introduced to several, who conducted themselves in a manner equally remote from an indecent familiarity and a studied fastidious pride. I shall devote a letter entirely to this interesting subject—and now return to the topography of the place.

The village and its dependencies consist of about sixty houses, several of which are for the accommodation of visitors; but, as the apprehension of earthquakes has confined them to one story each, that accommodation is neither convenient nor extensive. The baths of the Furnas are distant half a mile from the village, and the road is as delightful as can possibly be conceived. On inquiring of the Padre Guardian, who was the companion of my morning lounge, what were the objects worthy attention besides the Caldeiras of the Furnas, he immediately denoted their situation and name, and as they



lay within the sphere I had prescribed to myself, we visited them before dinner: they consist of springs called the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; a whirlpool whose name I could not learn, and a river whose waters are of a dingy red.

The springs issue from near the foot of a perpendicular hill, and although they are distant but about six feet from each other, there is an apparent difference in their taste and properties. The waters burst with great impetuosity from their sources, and after wandering a few yards in different directions, suddenly unite and form a stream of sufficient power and fall to turn a mill, seated some hundred yards beneath them. Leaving the mill, the stream assumes the character of a rivulet, and receiving some tributaries, bends through the village in front of the convent of the Franciscans. The water is bright and transparent, and held in great estimation both by the visitors and natives of the place.

The *Red River* takes its origin from Pico de Fer, a mountain abounding to such a degree in iron ore that the water issues thick and red from its source, and leaves a sediment in a glass of more than one-third in quantity, and something less than two-thirds in weight. This sediment is ferruginous and adhesive; hence, the bed

of the river is red ; every stone is thickly coated with a red saponaceous substance, and the smell of sulphur is so strong, that the stream is quite a nuisance to the town. I have seen the Red River, which is a tributary to the Mississippi : it retains its color a thousand miles from its source ; and I am told that this stream, after disappearing in a subterraneous channel, finds its way to the sea and tinges it for a considerable space with the marks of blood. The mines have formerly been worked, but with what degree of success I cannot learn. The Furnasians know nothing beyond the age in which they live ; and seem to find their account in their ignorance, for they are happy in the possession of a mind pleased with a little.

The next subject of natural curiosity is "*The Whirlpool.*" This singular phenomenon is not caused by an eddy, or counteraction of waters in a deep river, but is miraculously expressed in the center of a clear spring, wherein a muddy lavatic substance rises perpetually to the surface, and, whirling round with a quick rotatory motion, forms a vortex of such power, that it defies the resistance of any animal that falls within its action, and sucks down, with rapidity and greediness, every thing which chance or curiosity casts in its way. Those objects never more appear ; and where the object is



purposely thrown in, and tied to a cord, the sensation is similar to that which is experienced by the mariner who sounds in a deep sea: the line flies from the hand, and the lead while drawing up appears of an enormous weight. An authentic story is current here respecting this wonderful vortex, which is a melancholy demonstration of the fatal power it is known to possess. The spring in which it exercises its dominion is celebrated for abounding in water-cresses of the finest sort. One of two girls who came to gather this vegetable, inadvertently slipped into the influence of the rotatory motion, but not being absolutely in the vortex, her companion flew to her assistance, seized her by the hand, and held her above the danger till the united cries of both brought some villagers to the spot—but it was only to witness a scene of horror and death. The companion lost her hold before aid could be administered; and the poor sufferer, after whirling round and round in the presence of her bewailing friends and relatives, uttered a scream of agony and finally vanished from the sight! On casting any thing considerable into the vortex the rotatory motion increases; and on endeavouring to withdraw the object, the action amounts to perturbation and rage. It is considered as idle to attempt to fathom it: two hundred fathoms having been tried in vain! The water

of the spring is clear and pellucid ; the lavatic fluid is thick and impure : it does not amalgamate with the water : it rises to the surface and descends again to the bottom, by laws apparently unknown to man. The diameter is about twenty feet ; the distance from the village of the Furnas not more than three hundred yards. That an object of so much terror should exist in the most rich and romantic part of this island, is a circumstance that loads the mind with awe and amazement, and which I can by no means account for. I state the fact with the view of exciting the speculation of the learned, and the investigation of the curious ; and shall now take my leave of this extraordinary work of nature.

Returning with my kind conductor to the convent, I was happy to learn from him that the wonderful operations of Providence in and around the valley, mingled with the uncommon circumstances in which they are placed, has a favorable effect on the character of the inhabitants, by rendering them moral and religious, and consequently sober and industrious members of social life. Indeed the valley bears testimony to the prevalence of this disposition of mind : it is highly cultivated, producing, in abundance, wine, oranges, figs, and all sorts of corn ; and shewing a population of a fair and florid complexion.



You may form some opinion of the munificence of nature to this insulated people when I inform you that our dinner at the convent was a magnificent one, and all the native produce of the valley ; fish and fowl, game and butcher's meat, wines red and white, and fruit of almost every climate, formed our repast, and was furnished to the convent by the inhabitants of the valley. There was nothing exotic but coffee, spice, and liqueurs. It would appear that Providence, from a principle of equity, gave peculiar indulgence to a people so often alarmed with fearful phenomena, and within the view and the action of perpetual fires.

I remained till the morning of the second day in the village, and left it with sentiments of gratitude to the worthy Padre, to the American consul, and to the numerous persons who honored me with their attentions and regard. For the present I leave you with the same impressions, and am, &c. &c.

## LETTER XVIII.

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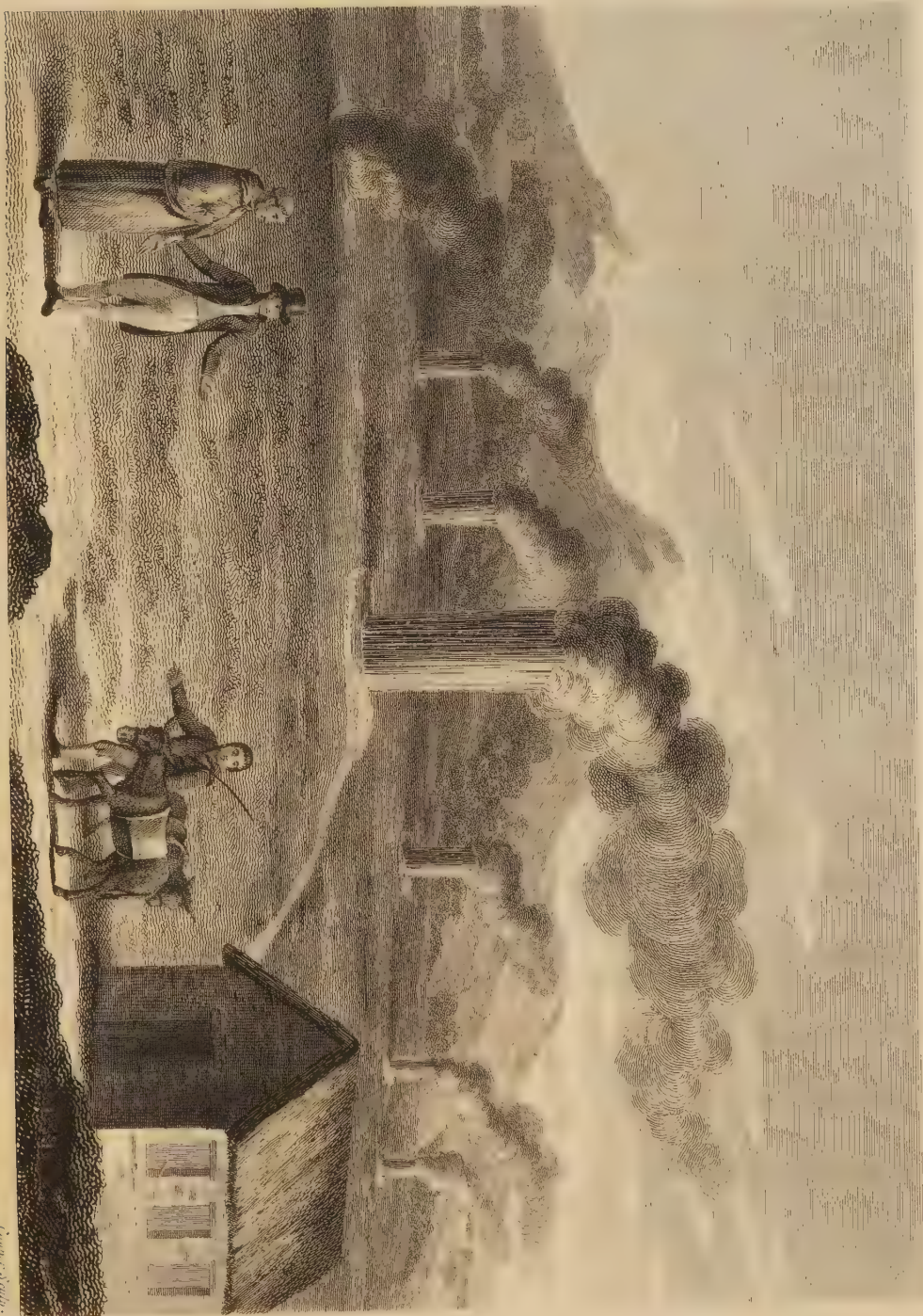
TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED. — THE CALDEIRAS—THE MUDDY CRATER—THE PERFORATED ROCK—THE HOT AND COLD STREAM—THE HOT AND COLD SPRINGS—THE BATHS.

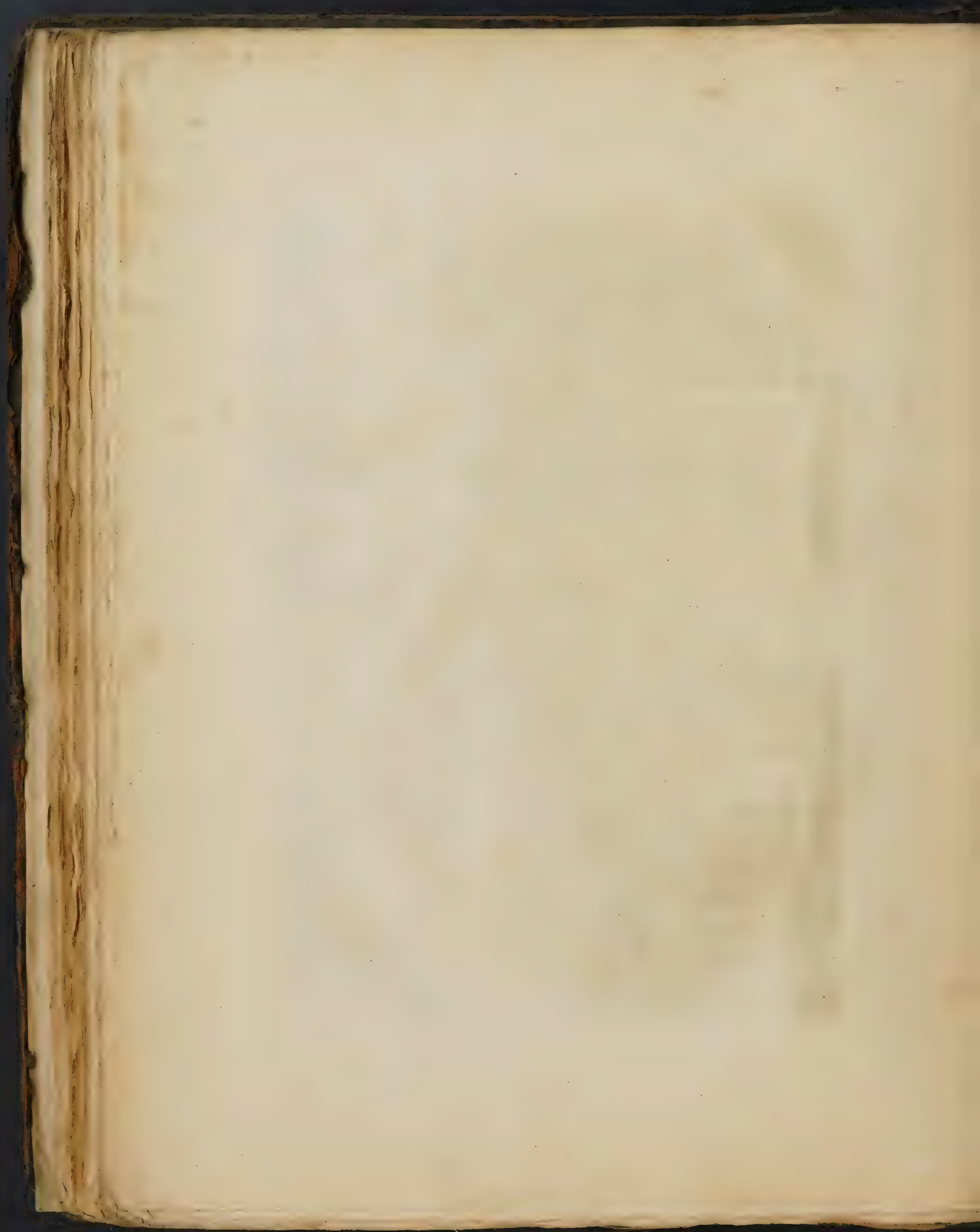
THROUGHOUT these wonderful islands, nothing can be more opposite than the two districts of the valley of the Furnas, known by the names of the Caldeiras and the Vale das Furnas. A dreary waste of volcanic sand, without shade or shelter, scorched by the burning rays of the sun, and intersected by deep ravines and yawning craters, where, instead of refreshing breezes, the most suffocating vapours are spread, and boiling waters, which, rising from the trembling earth, threaten to overwhelm the affrighted beholder, are descriptive of the Caldeiras; while on the other hand, shady groves, green pastures, flavid fields, streams of the purest water, fruits of the most delicious flavor, and air of the most balmy fragrance, characterize the Vale das Furnas.

Some time elapsed before I could summon sufficient resolution minutely to examine the Caldeiras. To contemplate such extraordinary appearances without emotion, and a fearful admiration of that Great Being who



*View of the Columns.*







calmly forms these miracles to operate on the minds and conduct of his creatures was impossible. It was impossible to view them without a sensation of exhausted strength; a disposition of mind favorable to humiliation and reverence, and an acknowledgment of incapacity to analyze that which soars so much beyond the calculation or comprehension of man.

The guide to the Caldeiras, whose feelings were blunted by the habit of perusing this wonderful scene, paid but little attention to the devotion of my manners: he hurried me from object to object; making the principal objects of curiosity divisible into;—1. The Caldeiras;—2. The Muddy Crater;—3. The Perforated Rock;—4. The Hot and Cold Stream;—5. The Hot and Cold Springs;—6. The Baths.

1. The Caldeiras of the Furnas are discoverable by vast columns of boiling water rising from springs of various diameters, and to a height in the greatest degree not exceeding twelve feet. The air is strongly impregnated with sulphur, and the impending atmosphere receives the burning vapor in the form of clouds which exhibit a beautiful variety of eccentric figures and lucid tints. The water is so hot as to boil an egg in two minutes; and beans, potatoes, and corn, in a propor-

tionable time, but it is so sulphuric and searching, that it impregnates the vegetable with the sulphurous acid it contains, and thereby renders it unfit for the food of man. For several yards round each Furnas or Caldeira, slight vapors issue from the earth, which leave traces of a sublimed sulphur on the places exposed to their action, and exhibit colors in which green, yellow, and azure are, for the most part, predominant. The principal Caldeira makes a grand appearance: the water is cast from several hundred valves, and rises and falls as if ejected through the spiracles of so many whales. When this action is viewed with attention opposite to the sun, the spherical surface is seen adorned with prismatic colors; and, were it not for the intense heat, and the sterile and dreary scene that surround it, it is a spectacle much more calculated to excite a generous admiration than a dastardly terror. But the heat is so great, and the ruin and desolation so glaring and gigantic, that the mind shrinks from the idea of pleasure, and falls into the melancholy consideration of such objects only as are sad, perishable, and subject to decay.

2. "The Muddy Crater," separated from the Grand Caldeira by a bank of volcanic substance, can be viewed but with mingled sensations: it is an object of stupendous horror that appears to appal the mind, and startle



the intellect, at the first sight, and yet, after reason or experience removed the first impressions of my fear, I made it also a foundation of pleasurable enjoyment. It is the same with fire, ruins, hurricanes, a stormy sky, a troubled ocean, a wild beast in chains, or a dead monster, which, either from their natural magnificence, or extraordinary novelty, become subjects of agreeable contemplation after they have been acknowledged at once dreadful and harmless. The vertex of the muddy crater is on a level with the plain, and leads to a vast cavern wherein its mineral and metallic contents are in a continued state of ebullition, and which it unceasingly endeavours to discharge through the vertex, and with a violence and uproar more powerful and mighty than the waves of the sea when they seek for admission into the recesses of their shores. But, strange as it may appear, the volcano has a limited domination: its lavatic matter swells and rises to the exact periphery of its vertex, but never overflows. It is, however, generally known in the valley, that the state of the atmosphere has a visible effect upon this crater, and that it possesses a very strong presentiment of every change in it. It has been discovered, that it possesses this quality in a more eminent degree than any barometer in the island. When the weather inclines to rain or wind, its noise increases from the dashing of waves to the roar of a hurricane, and

when the weather is disposed to moderate the roar subsides to the sound of waves beating against the strands of the sea. Nor is it slightly prognostic of the changes which are about to take place in the air. The barometer foretels the state of the weather only for about twenty-four hours, whereas there is a certainty that the weather will continue fine three or four weeks when the noise of the crater subsides. And such is the infallibility of this natural barometer, that it has never been known entirely to subside before the most perfect equilibrium of all the constituent parts of the air indicates, with certainty, that this great decline of detonation will not be made in vain. There are also artificial causes which operate a change of this wonderful phenomenon: stones thrown into the vertex are succeeded by an increase of noise commensurate with their magnitude, and cold water cast in excites an effervescence and uproar almost too horrible to be heard or to behold. Under this experiment, and during heavy rains, the lava swells up with impetuosity to the vertex of the crater, and emits a spray of the heat, color, and consistence of boiling lead. The ground, for several yards round, is intensely hot, and no vestige of vegetation can be traced. The vertex of the crater is about forty-five feet in circumference; but, as it is hourly wasting by the ebullition and attrition of its fiery contents, its magnitude will ultimately



expand and absorb the Caldeiras of clear water which at present play around its tremendous gulf. The heat emitted was so excessive and suffocating that I could make no farther observations, and I gladly turned to—

3 “The Perforated Rock.” This beautiful object has been formed by the unremitting industry of a hot spring immediately beneath it, and which it now serves as a covering or dome. The rock is about six feet in circumference, about four feet deep in the centre, and is perforated, in such a manner, that its surface resembles a sieve through which the hot water emits itself with wonderful impetuosity and force. I have seen stones wasted by attrition and hollowed out by the tedious operation of water falling from the eaves of a house drop by drop, but I believe this is the only instance of a rock being perforated through and through by the ebullition of a spring, or the perpendicular action of water beating up against it from the ground. The water, which is perfectly transparent, and strongly impregnated with sulphuret of iron, flows into the adjacent—

4. “Hot and Cold Stream.” This phenomenon is produced by the ebullition of numerous hot and cold springs which rise in the bed of the rivulet, which bounds the Caldeiras, and in many instances not more than a

span distant from each other. The springs are excessively hot and cold, and, as each of the hot emits a steam which rises in a spiral volute from the surface, the general appearance is more fascinating and peculiar than can well be conceived.

5. "The Hot and Cold Springs" There is nothing remarkable in these, except that they rise immediately near each other and possess qualities entirely opposite. Those springs which run through mountains in which there are veins of ore, take up saline and metallic matter and rise extremely cold and those which issue from volcanic caverns surcharged with sulphur ascend hot and violent, sending forth vapours and exhalations such as I have before described.

6. "The Baths." From what has been observed of the other objects of this miraculous ground, and the diversity of water it contains, there can be no doubt of the powerful effect of these waters as a medicine. But as some of them are chalibeate, or strongly impregnated with iron or steel, and as others contain saline and sulphuric particles, they should not be taken without it is well understood that they are adapted to the nature of the disease for which they are resorted to. Hitherto, without any observance of the physical property, they have been



alternately esteemed and neglected. Our ignorance of them, however, must vanish if this work should attract the attention of the English, as there are many men of travel and science in England who will only require to be made acquainted with this place, and to see the propriety of visiting it in order to receive more valuable information on the subject of such inestimable restoratives, and to introduce them to the general knowledge of mankind. The buildings of the bath are miserably constructed, and, from neglect, in a wretched condition; but this can in no material degree affect the place in case of an eventual increase of visitors; labour being cheap, materials abundant, and ground to build on, with a current of hot spring, to be had at a trifling rate.

## LETTER XIX.

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### TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED—SUBTERRANEAN SPIRITS.

I CANNOT with propriety quit the valley of the Furnas, without informing you, that its inhabitants have an idea that fairies and subterranean spirits occupy the caverns and fissures of the rocks with which nature has distinguished this part of the country, I have had a thousand fantastical stories of grotesque figures related to me; some big, some little, some light and airy, and some motionless and heavy as the matter they inhabited.

The world has been used to look upon all these stories as whimsical and ridiculous; but surely these islanders have sufficient cause to believe the existence of such dæmons, from the accounts of this kind given in the correspondence of the Padre Guardian and other members of his monastery. One would imagine, that matters, which the monks look upon as facts, might have a claim to some estimation, in the eyes of the rest of the world. There are many occasional hints concerning these



subterranean spirits in the monkish prayers, but what of all other things is the strangest, and most incontestible proof of the general and settled belief of the priesthood here in the existence of such dæmons is, that in an oraison made for the occasion, it is mentioned as a very singular circumstance, that the inhabitants of the valley had never seen any of the dæmons they so accurately described. The monks content themselves in telling St. Antonio that the spirits which torment them, employ themselves in raising tempests and thundering under ground. There are some, however, who acknowledge that they have seen them, and the Padre Guardian went so far as to assert, that he found one day, after a violent commotion in the earth, a heavy substance, six inches long, in which he traced out, with the assistance of his brethren, the eyes, arms, legs, and breast of a dæmoniac figure. Whoever will compare the description with that of the least kind of subterranean dæmons, will find great reason to be convinced, that as sure as ever any such creature existed, this was one of them. The event also answers the general intent of their discovering themselves, which is allowed to be with the evil design of convulsing the earth and tormenting the peaceable inhabitants of the valley. The monastery does not make a public profession to strangers of its being in possession of this vindictive spirit, but I prevailed on the Padre to confess to me, that when the

muddy crater, or mouth of hell as it is locally called, denotes by its detonations an eruption or an earthquake, they carry it in procession with the image of St. Antonio, and if the cause of apprehension does not diminish by supplication and prayer, they flog both the dæmon and the saint and expose them to the action of the liquid fire.

After such absolute proofs of the existence of these subterranean dæmons, I hope the world will pay more respect than has of late been done to the good people who relate the exploits of them: for my part I am as fully convinced of their existence, as I am, or ever shall be, of any thing that I have no other proof of, than the assertion and testimony of the inhabitants of a monastery. I should not omit that the dæmons assume at times the character of balls of sulphur, and after performing a variety of eccentric evolutions in the air, fall apparently lifeless to the earth. My good Padre, exhibited two of these balls; they are roundish in figure and of a yellowish colour, much harder than common sulphur, of a very different texture, and covered over with fine bright glossy crystals chequered with amber and emerald tints. The proofs that these balls were dæmons was further supported on the evidence that they burst in the air when exposed to the action of fire, and do vast mischief to all around. It is very probable, notwith-



standing these evidences, that to you the size, figure, and description of those balls, will perfectly agree with pyrites, and that the crystalline efflorescences are very easily reconciled to them as pyrites, and not to dæmons or to sulphur balls generated, as some will have it, in the air. Indeed I have often met with pyrites, which, after a thorough wetting, discovered holes in several parts, covered over with crystallizations, just such as the dæmons of the monks, fine, pellucid, and of efflorescences mixed with amber and pure vitriol. As to their capacity to explode and burn with a white flame, it is easily explained, since many of the pyrites, which have something arsenical in them, are combustible, and burn with a whitish or greenish white flame instead of a blue one. Upon the whole, what the balls are, which the monks describe as dæmons, I cannot pretend to determine, but the world will have shrewd suspicions that they are not dæmons, especially as it must know that pyrites of a globular form, and answering to all the characters of those balls, are found in various parts of Europe, and that if picked up and preserved any time they grow rotten, and cavernous, and crumble into powder.

Nor are those dæmons the only objects of the terror and superstition of the inhabitants of this valley. Living on a surface which often trembles and undulates

from the violent action of suppressed fires, the vain curiosity to pry into futurity betrays them into divers extravagant practices, that are not only extravagant, but prejudicial to their repose. This weakness, for I have no disposition to call it wickedness, puts them upon having recourse to prognostics, to soothsayers, to interpreters of dreams, and expounders of presages. This last kind of divination is very ancient; but these poor islanders surpass all people in the science of presages; insomuch, that, by bringing their several observations under rules, they have reduced it into an art, and quit their houses, their altars, and their fields, when any systematic presage announces a volcanic eruption, or a trembling of the earth.

These presages are of divers kinds; the principal of which are sounds, or divine or dæmoniac voices underground. But the sources of these noises, and of this superstition, I have already explained, and as both arise from the extraordinary character of the place and the singular condition of its inhabitants, it would be unwise to encourage a neglect of the presages, and cruel to condemn the people for seeking even a delusion as a remedy against the horrors to which they are exposed. The monks have several expedients to frustrate bad omens; they implore particular saints to turn aside the



event; they make the people perform penance, make offerings, and sacrifices, and finally, if the presage have the appearance of being confirmed, they set up a cry against St. Antonio, and class him with the dæmons already named. The natural conclusion of which is, that the hopes from the one, and the terrors from the other, result more from the nature of the residence than from the phantoms of a distempered mind. I shall in my next give you a description of my departure from the Furnas.

## LETTER XX.

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### TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.—PICO DE FER.

I LEFT the valley of the Furnas, that theatre of the wonders of nature, an hour before dawn, and arrived at the top of the Pico de Fer just as the sun was appearing unobscured by the smallest cloud ; when the air was in that temperature which is most friendly to man, by communicating vigor and agility to the frame, and the greatest degree of activity and life to the ideas.

The access to the Pico de Fer is rendered both inconvenient and perilous, for a distance of near three miles, by the variety of circumstances which I described on my route to the Furnas. The summit of the mountain is a narrow plain, or ridge covered with lava, scorix, ashes, and sand, which have been thrown out of the volcano at its successive eruptions, and which are so loose as to endanger the traveller being swallowed up at every step of his progress. The first of the sublime objects which the Pico presents, is the immense mass of



its own colossal body rent in many parts by earthquakes, excavated in other places by partial eruptions, and the whole nearly covered with verdure and shrubs whose variegated assemblage soften the wild and terrific variety of the scene. The observer at this elevation, discovers not only the whole of the Pico, but of the valley of the Furnas, with its village and hamlets, extensive plain, boiling springs, and meandering rivers. The coast of Ponta del Gada is also perceived; and the eye takes in the environs of Villa Franca, while the sea at indistinct distances presents an object the most majestic, bounded only by the horizon.

The lava on the south-east side of the mountain was evidently the last in a state of fusion. The stream, though partially covered with verdure, is about half a quarter of a mile in breadth, and can be followed for two miles where it assumed the bed of a river, and found its way into the ocean. The course of another stream is along the north-west side, and the effervescence that produced it must have been excessive, as it is seen through its fissures twenty feet thick, and flows over a vast tract of country. The smell is that of liver of sulphur, and the consistence such as to yield sparks with steel almost as plentifully as a flint. There have been several craters on this immense ridge which have sunk

into their volcanic focus, and the spots which they had occupied have become deep gulphs, interspersed with immense rocks or blocks of lava. But such is the fruitfulness of the country, and the benignity of the climate, that vegetation appears to predominate, and almost to hide the devastation which once prevailed throughout the scene of devastation and waste. The Pico is also diversified by fountains and streams of considerable magnitude. But as the supply of these streams can only be from water deposited by the clouds, I cannot conceive that they are regular or permanent.

At the foot of the Pico de Fer it is, that those vapors and springs arise which supply the neighbouring lakes as well as the numerous rivulets that take their departure from the foot of the mountain. Of those, the most remarkable are the iron springs, which, from their strong mineral qualities, claim the peculiar attention of the physician, chymist, and philosopher; and of the invalid, also, to whom they seem to offer much hope of benefit to be derived. From their taste and color it is evident how much they partake of the substance of iron. No conjecture, however, can be formed as to their efficacy from the experience of the natives, as they employ them without consulting the disease or the manner and use of the application. Some of those springs are formed by



the constant ebullition of water at the bottom of a volcanic focus constructed of iron, under which is a perpetual fire, and some issue from mines of iron and caverns so cold, that the water almost freezes the touch, and is considered dangerous as a beverage.

Having said so much on this subject, it is proper here to remark that an iron mine from which one of the finest springs issues has at some former time been worked, and, from what I can learn, with very considerable success. But it unfortunately happened that while some miners were at work, a subterraneous explosion took place and buried them and their utensils in the ground. The manner in which the monks account for the circumstance has put a final stop to all labours of this description; and, though there is little doubt that the Pico de Fer contains more iron than any country in Europe, there is little probability that its mines will ever be worked. The monks observe, that the sulphurous exhalations of the subterraneous caverns must adhere to the arches of the iron mines, as soot does to the sides of chimnies; where they mix themselves with the nitre or salt-petre which comes out of the arches, and to make a kind of crust which will very easily take fire. There are several ways they say by which this crust may take fire: viz. by the inflammable breath of the substance which is a kind

of sulphur that spontaneously ignites. By a fermentation of vapours to a degree of heat, equal to that of fire and flame. By the falling of some great stone which is undermined by labor, and striking against another, produces some sparks that set fire to the neighbouring combustible matter, which being a kind of natural gunpowder, at the appulse of the fire, as I have described on another occasion, goes off with a sudden blast or violent explosion, rumbling in the bowels of the earth, and lifting up the ground above it, so as to make terrible havoc and devastation, till it gets a vent or a discharge. However this may be, the iron mines have not been worked since the calamity before-mentioned, and I am indebted to a second explosion, which led to a discovery of the tools and implements of the unfortunate miners, for the facts I have here disclosed. Tradition, it is true, says much about the wealth of iron and even of lead mines, but tradition is not a sufficient light for him who would improve from experience and elucidate by truth. Thus much is certain, that every object announces the existence of lead and iron ore, and of the facility of working the mines in a manner highly profitable to the proprietors. But superstition and terror palsy the capacity of the Portuguese: it remains for the English to bring to light the hidden treasures of Pico de Fer: the Portuguese will never struggle against difficulties which priests and



dæmons unite in rendering more and more insurmountable.

On descending the Pico de Fer towards my destination on the north shore of the Island, I soon discovered a diminution of that character of excessive rudeness which I have delineated, and the view began to open a contrast which afforded a pleasing relief to the mind. The violent traces of divine power and sterile nature were seen to yield to a manifestation of divine goodness in a rich perspective, where man was seen in pursuit of objects calculated to delight, and not to appal, his heart. Houses, villas, and villages, flavid fields and pasture lands interposed every where, and cause the blush of conscious glow in him who might have been just before disposed to arraign the clemency and wisdom of his Maker.

## LETTER XXI.

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### TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED—PORTO FERMOZA.

After a toilsome descent from Pico de Fer, I shaped my course for Porto Fermoza, having the sea on my right, and the uncultivated mountains of the Alagoa on my left hand. The distance twelve miles.

The soil of the country through which I passed was not every where of the same quantity. For behind me it was formed of decomposed lava. To the south it was light and friable, and the face of the country finely diversified with wood and lawn. The trees are small without underwood. Between the trees the ground is covered with grass, of which there is great abundance, and as verdant as in the spring of the year. To the westward the country was found cultivated with a rich soil; for instead of a thin stratum of decomposed lava, it was a deep black mould, such as is fit for the production of grain of any kind. Here the arable lands were interspered with some of the finest pasture grounds in the



world; not, however without a few rocky patches, and dreadful chasms, formed by the earthquakes to which it was at one time so dreadfully subject. To the north, or towards the sea, the face of the country changes: it is comparatively bare, producing no wood, but covered with a kind of thin brush of shrubs and plants about as high as the knees: the hills near the coast are low, but others rise behind them, increasing by a gradual ascent to a considerable distance, with yawning caverns and dreadful precipices between. These are not the effect of volcanic eruptions, but of tremendous earthquakes which opened portions of the earth to immeasurable depths, and split some mountains so completely from the summit to the base, that the traveller can pass through the fissure and proceed from one valley to another without experiencing the smallest inequality in his road. In observing some of the chasms in the valley or plain ground, I had a very favorable opportunity of discovering the matter of which the earth is composed, and also of ascertaining that the plain of the island is formed of primitive earth, and not of substances forced up by volcanic eruptions under the sea.

In one of those fissures rent to the depth of several hundred feet, the amazing beneficence of the Creator of all things displayed itself in a most striking manner; for,

at the top of all is vegetable mould, composed of various substances proper to imbibe and conduct moisture to the roots of trees and plants; under this are sands and pebbles, to carry off the superabundant moisture; and, that this may not run off too fast, thin strata of clay intervene to stop it; and, finally, lest these thin beds of clay should give way, they are supported by layers of a harder and ferruginous substance. I mention this perfection of wisdom in this sort of structure, in the superficial part of the island, because the same character or plan of formation in the mountains is no where observed. For on examination of mountains on this road and others that I have passed, it appears that they are composed of metallic and sulphurous matter mixed with stones and sand, but destitute of that system which characterize all the other works of Omnipotence.

It need hardly be repeated, that the tract between Pico de Fer and Porto Fermoza, and, in fact, that all the Island, affords a great variety of plants to enrich the collection of the botanist; there are also found a great variety of flowering shrubs; a species of *salvia fortea*, and several kinds, which I had thought peculiar to South America. This was afterwards accounted for by the long and extensive intercourse between this island and the Brazils. Seeds, plants, and shrubs have been constantly



imported, and after flourishing in private gardens, they have been propagated by various accidental circumstances in such parts as were calculated for their growth and improvement. Coffee, pepper, and myrtle shrubs were frequently met with, and several bearing a berry the juice of which has an agreeable tartness.

As to animals of a wild nature, those of the four-footed kind can scarcely be said to exist much less to abound. For during this excursion but one quadruped presented itself.

This beast was about the size and differed in few respects from the English rabbit. I also saw the track of an animal whose foot resembled that of a polecat or weasel. On minute enquiry, I learned, that the rabbit is the only undomesticated quadruped on the Island, and that that animal has multiplied his race since his introduction from the continent to a most prodigious degree. On the first discovery of the island it was found to be completely destitute of quadrupeds. From which it may be inferred that it was never inhabited before the original settlement by the Portuguese as mentioned in one of my former letters.

Nor did the woods or country I passed through

abound to any considerable degree with birds. And the few that I met with presented little variety of plumage, or melody of song. The canary, degenerated in color, and in voice, principally prevails. But such is the vast quantity of quails, that I might have shot as many as I pleased, had number been my object. Nearly equal in number, also, are partridges, the breed of which was imported from South America, and which bears some affinity to the pheasants. The legs are red, the breast crimson, the eyes scarlet, and the expression and plumage beautiful. The partridge and the quail are frequently domesticated, and when taken by snares or in nets, put into coops, where they are preserved for the purposes of occasional use. I met with crows similar to those in England, and kites, pursuing flocks of pigeons, were not unfrequently to be observed.

I must here introduce an anecdote which has some analogy to this subject. While I was at Ponta del Gado, a vessel arrived from England addressed to Mr. Read. I went with him on board, and on expressing some surprize at seeing several skylarks in a cage, was informed that they were driven off the coast in a gale of wind, and were so exhausted when they sought for shelter and repose on the rigging, that they suffered themselves to be taken without the smallest resistance. This cir-



cumstance, which had in itself nothing out of the common, offered much pleasure to Mr. Read, as he assured me, from there being no larks on the island, nothing could gratify him more than introducing them ; which he did, having obtained them from the captain of the ship, by setting them at liberty on a farm which he holds immediately at the back of the town. That farm he often visits with Mrs. Read, and it is difficult to conceive the sorrow they experience at such times as they miss hearing the skylarks' song.

At the close of the day, which was so fully occupied by the above reflections and researches, I arrived at Porto Fermoze, and took up my residence with some mendicant monks, to whom I delivered an introduction from the Padre Guardian of das Furnas. I was received with hospitality, but in every thing there were manifest that violation of cleanliness and decorum which naturally originate with those who have no protection from any species of vulgar life, by pride of birth, or education of any kind. The supper, however, if not clean or well cooked, was abundant in fish, and as I looked more for information than for luxury, I made the conversation turn on the subject of the fish of those seas. On this subject I found the monks well informed. I present you the substance of their account. On the banks of sand

and mud there are great quantities of oysters, muscles, cockles, and other shell fish, which, during Lent and on fast days, seem to be the principal subsistence of the poorer order of the natives of the coast, who go into shoal water with their little boats and pick them out with their hands. They are not, however, under the necessity of subsisting wholly on this food during their Saint's days, for the numerous bays abound with a variety of other fish; some of which they strike with gigs, and some they take with nets, and hook and line. On hauling the Sune, great numbers of fish are caught, and of a variety so great as not to be defined. Indeed, lying as the island does in the center of the Atlantic, it is frequently visited by migratory fish from all parts of the ocean, and the flying fish, and pursuing dolphin, voracious shark, and ponderous whale, shooting water through his spiracles, are all to be seen at various seasons of the year.

It is now time to conclude, first remarking that Porto Fermoza shall receive farther attention in my next letter from this place.



## LETTER XXII.

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TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.—PORTO FERMOZA.

THERE is no manifest difference between the harbors of Porto Fermoza and Villa Franca. They both had their day of prosperity and commerce; the former owes its ruin to the shock which destroyed the latter, and which shook the very island itself to its center.

No sooner had Porto Fermoza been struck off the rich chart of commerce by the sudden shock of an earthquake, than religion began to enthrall its inhabitants, and to impose on them that superstitious awe which attaches their posterity to those religious ceremonies that are alike extravagant and idolatrous. No sooner had the wild and merciless decree of fate destroyed the harbour and the source of industry, than the affrighted natives flew to their temples, and have ever since employed themselves to preserve to their sleek and pampered clergy the full monopoly of their remaining trade;

that is, the profitable barter of relics, miracles, dispensations, plenary indulgencies, pardons, and all the disgusting buffooneries which imposture, aided by credulity and calamity, had contrived, manufactured, and converted into a lucrative, merchantable commodity, as if for the triple purpose of enriching a profligate worthless priesthood, cozening the poor and the deluded, and brutalizing the alarmed citizens of the place.

I would not dwell on this subject ; but you can have no idea of the trade that is carried on in Porto Fermoza, Villa Franca, and all other places here, where commerce has been destroyed by volcanic shocks, between dead saints and living sinners. Every convent, every chapel, and every church, has its huckster's stall or shop, where a reverend commission broker constantly attends, ready to deliver from his purified hands, each wonder-working article to the different descriptions of deluded persons, who flock in crowds to this ecclesiastical market, in the pious hope of purchasing health, cures, and exemptions from earthquakes, remission of sins, &c. &c.

That this fraudulent, blasphemous barter is encouraged by the calamities to which the island is subject, there can be no doubt. But admitting that terror urges the people to what they are doing, and that they are



sincere in their present opinions, it is evident that they have no objections to the dishonorable traffic that enriches knaves at the expense of fools. They do not feel shocked or scandalized at the impious effrontery of a priest standing proxy for the Divinity, and making God appear to transgress his own commandments ; virtue compromising with vice, and the bounty of Heaven put up to public auction, have nothing in them to shock or offend the piety of the timid Azoreans ; even murder, the most atrocious of all crimes, and against which the irrevocable curse of the Almighty stands registered in sacred writ, becomes licensed and even justified in their sight, whenever the church, always distressed or avaricious, finds it convenient to her purpose to protect the assassin.

But I will pass over the ill-concealed debaucheries of the religious of both sexes at Porto Fermoza and other places of this island, whose vows should bind them to chastity and celibacy ; I will forbear, in gratitude to the hospitality I experienced from them, all comments on the reiterated vows of chastity and celibacy which they voluntarily make in the face of Heaven, and as voluntarily violate in the face of their mistresses and lares ; neither will I dwell on the well authenticated tales of those nuns and friars who communicate by

means of subterranean recesses, and, for fear of detection, consign the wretched produce of their illicit amours to a premature dissolution, before nature has ripened the miserable embryos into shape or existence.

If any one should question the truth of these facts, or if the mysteries of these pious brothels should afford any pleasure in the recital, I must refer to such as have a disposition to give information on the subject. The facts are unfortunately too notorious to be denied, and too atrocious to be defended. It is not, however, my province to dwell upon the abuses of the church, or to reprobate that religion which excites so much horror and alarm in some breasts. Leaving aside the motives of the priesthood, into which it can answer no good purpose to wander, or to examine too scrupulously, and with which, in fact, we have little or nothing to do; the only points for consideration are, whether the existing abuses, of any kind whatever, ought to receive the sanction of positive written law, or the still more venerable sanction of prescriptive right; and whether establishments notoriously injurious to public and private morals, of no possible good whatever to society, but on the contrary evidently hurtful in all their various operations to the general interests of the community should be suffered to remain? I have your authority for



asserting that they ought not. I have the authority of the church for asserting, that they ought to be held sacred, venerated, and preserved in all their integrity to the end of time. I shall not take upon me to decide between you, although I cannot evince any partiality for a culte that tends to degrade the understanding and to pervert the heart. I shall say little more on the subject of a religion which deserves expulsion by its own maxims, and which is fit only for tyrants and slaves: in which faith is every thing, and morals nothing; and which is as gross an insult to the common sense of mankind, as it is injurious to virtue, and hostile to civil liberty.

## LETTER XXIII.

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TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED — MONKS  
OF FERMOZA.

NOTWITHSTANDING what I have said of the monks in my last letter, I can assure you I did not leave the convent of Porto Fermoza, without envying them the life of tranquillity which they lead, and which the din of politics and public business deny me the advantage of enjoying.

The monks of Fermoza live a life of tranquillity amidst the general tumults which distract the rest of a world, of which they hardly hear the rumours, and know nothing of the mighty sovereigns, but by name, when they pray for them. They are like moles who dig themselves peaceable and secure habitations, while the politician endeavours to protect himself from the ambitious fury of the great, and while the eagles and vultures of the world are tearing one another to pieces, and seeking for dominion over the weaker tribes. The principal disadvantage of their retirement and solitude, was, that it caused them to fall into erroneous and fantastical opinions and



systems, for want of examining and proving them in conversation and friendly debate.

Had I lived in the dark ages of antiquity, before plenty had poured her cornucopia into the lap of commerce, or arts and sciences had illumined the mind of industry; while manufactures were yet in a state of infancy and imperfection, and men were unskilled in improving the gifts of nature, I should have envied the mode of life and the retirement of the friars of Fermoza. Their convent is seated on the most picturesque spot of the town, their gardens are cultivated with care, and running waters bordered with orange trees, form a delightful retreat for the comfort and convenience both of the brotherhood and of the weary traveller, who constantly seeks the refreshing shade amidst the fervent heats of the noon. At a little distance the ocean rolls his mighty torrent, in which the Fermozean beauties perform their morning ablutions, and rise, like the poetical divinities, dripping from the sea, and carnationed by ther efrigerant element. The excursions of the friars are seldom extended beyond the contracted sphere whence they procure the common necessities of life. Their minds appear untainted by envy, as is their body by disease. And their humane and generous disposition, their decent deportment and hospitality gain the love and admiration of all who con-

template them in this light, and who are ignorant of the vices of their religion and the irregularities of their life.

In speaking of their hospitality, it is honorable to the island to remark that it has no taverns or other places of refreshment, and that the convents supply their place, and accommodate strangers in the most interesting and amiable manner, without any expectation of remuneration or reward. On arriving at a convent, the stranger asks for the Padre Guardian, who introduces him to the whole fraternity, and after shewing him a vacant or an abdicated cell for his use, consults with him whether he prefers to live in public or in private during his stay. If the former be preferred, he lives with great comfort in society; if the latter, his table is served in his cell, and he is left in the complete enjoyment of the most undisturbed repose. I had an interesting testimony of the unobtrusive character of the monks during my stay at Fermoza. The day after my arrival, being much fatigued by my passage over Pico de Fer, I asked for materials for writing and retired to my cell. While in the act of taking down my notes, one of the friars, who was the most loquacious of the community, entered silent and cautious, and having deposited some apples on a table which he took from the cuff of his garment, he bowed to a crucifix which was directly opposite to me and retreated without the smallest



manifestation of his being aware of my presence in the cell. It was the same with the Padre Guardian: he came in with apparent caution; offered me coffee and other refreshments before dinner, and as I rose to thank him, he begged me to be seated and to excuse him for breaking in upon my retirement. When I joined the community at dinner, all was vivacity and kindness on their part, and attention and gratitude on mine, and I left their convent with a sincere regret that I should have to reprobate the religion or the morals of such men. However, when I see their path smoothe and strewed with flowers, I shall rejoice; when I find it rugged and planted with vice, I shall repine. But, unable to judge for myself, why should I judge for them. By submitting to their errors, I feel they lose their force. Besides, on a retrospective view, should not my heart yield to, and acknowledge the wisdom and justice of that Supreme Being, whose eyes penetrate into futurity, and whose hands possess the power of punishment, and who has, nevertheless sanctioned the religion of the monks and suffered them to spread throughout the world notwithstanding the sloth and impurity of their lives.

## LETTER XXIV.

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### TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.—RIBEIRA GRANDE.

AFTER an interesting interval of rest at Porto Fermoza, I took my departure for Ribeira Grande. The distance I could have performed in about four hours, but the attention I had to bestow on a country, originating from fiery eruptions, and afterwards adorned with villas and villages, verdant hills and flowery fields, occupied nearly the whole of the day. In truth he who has not seen this part of the Azores, has seen the world in an imperfect light, and is ignorant of the most extraordinary productions of nature. Such is the fertility of the country through which I passed, that were it not for the configuration of the mountains and the gulfs in the plains which indicated the agency of fire in their construction, the mind might readily be deceived, and exult in a kind of internal satisfaction that the multiplicity of beauty it surveyed, was to be denominated the natural munificence, not the most extraordinary phenomenon of nature.

The first symptom of existing subterranean fire which



I met with on this road, was on my approach to Ribeira Grande. It is a light vapour which shoots out of an aperture about twelve inches wide in the side of a mountain through a fissure, in which the road has been made to the town. This vapour after shooting out horizontally suddenly ascends to a considerable height, throwing out spontaneous columns, and varying in colour as it rises in the air. It is a very light colour in the day time, and in the night it has the appearance of ignition, or the resemblance of flame. My guide filled up the orifice with some difficulty, in order that I might observe the phenomena which attended such an act. A noise was soon heard like the boiling of water with great violence, and small columns of the confined vapour were seen to burst through some weak places adjacent to the orifice, and so highly electrical, that, in the place of ascending in a column, they frequently forked or zig-zagged like lightning in a dark atmosphere. The guide appeared to think it dangerous to keep the principal passage of the vapour too long pent up, for fear it should generate an earthquake, or an explosion which would blow up the mountain. This apprehension gained upon me so much that I yielded to the philosophy of the peasant, and while he opened the aperture gradually, I laid my ear to it with the view of forming some estimation of its depth by the nature of its sounds. The action of boiling water I could hear very distinctly, but while I was thus em-

ployed, my guide interrupted me by exclaiming that I was engaged in the most dangerous design that could be performed. On explanation I learned from him, that of the numerous persons who put their ear to the aperture from a curiosity similar to mine, they all became mad, instantly mad, and were never again restored to the light of reason or the rational government of themselves. The same principle which made me attend to the philosophy of my guide, on a recent occasion, made me respect his opinion on this, and I spontaneously withdrew before the threatened visitation should come upon me, which, of all others, is the most dreadful.

On entering Ribeira Grande, and passing through the usual formalities of my introduction to the Padre Guardian of the convent of St. Francis, I made it my first duty to enquire into the malignant power said to be exercised by the vapour over those who receive it through the organ of the ear into the head, and I found the report of my guide to be perfectly correct. I was even introduced to a victim of its subtle agency. It was a lay brother of the order of St. Francis, who was under this afflicting visitation. The instant he was introduced to me, I could perceive that it wanted no very great science nor sagacity to discover that his case was real mania. The poor being had on him all the concomitant symptoms of madness:



his visage was flushed, his eyes quick and sparkling, and his anxiety excessive. His conversation, too, appeared to dwell on one object; lamenting ideal distress, and thinking himself an unfortunate heretic; he implored his brethren not to report him to the Inquisition, or to condemn his soul to hell before he had time to make his peace with Heaven. Soothed by promises of mercy and intercession, he left the apartment uttering broken prayers and latin hymns aloud. I learnt that his disorder was seldom outrageous. When it was, the practice was to bleed him copiously; to apply cataplasms to his feet, give him some of the sudorific decoctions, with the intention of lessening the heat of the brain, and causing the revulsion of the humour into the extremities, or at least of expelling it by perspiration. At other times a dark cell and low diet are had recourse to; but the first remedy has been attended with a success which does honor to the parties who prescribed it. Four years have elapsed since this first calamitous occurrence, previously to which, the sufferer was remarkable for the brightness of his genius, and the strength of his judgment; but no sooner was the deadly vapour instilled into his ear, than the coruscation of genius and the soundness of judgment instantly disappeared, and reduced him to the dreadful state I have just described. Arguing with the Franciscans on the subject, and urging whether the insanity of their

lay-brother might not be attributed to other causes than that of the vapour, they allowed that it might, but at the same time observed, that there were so many instances of insanity caused by the vapour, and that as they knew he had exposed himself from curiosity to receive it through the ear into the brain, they were justified in attributing his madness to that cause, and that alone. Having had no grounds for disputing this surmise I had to yield my opinion, but not before I made the most minute inquiries, the result of which was, that the mania may be caused by the chemical action of the sulphuric and vitriolic acid of the vapour, which, by penetrating into the minutest pores of the brain subject to their action, operated as a solvent, or produced irritation by sheathing themselves in the pores of the body, in which they become mixed. For the correctness of this conclusion, however, I cannot vouch. It is generally understood that vitriolic and sulphurous acids possess very solvent powers, and that they strongly attract and can be as strongly attracted. But whether they are capable of conveying their properties through vapour and retaining their distinguishing qualities in an impalpable shape, is a question which I do not feel myself competent to determine, as it will require a multitude of experiments satisfactorily to prove. I shall only further remark, that as the vapour is composed of combustible bodies like metals,



or the compound ones as phosphoreted hydrogen, sulphureted hydrogen, and the metallic phosphurets generated in the fiery abyss from which the vapour ascends, it may become so far impregnated with oxygen as to possess that peculiar acid which, if communicated to the brain, might act as a solvent or irritant till madness ensues.

I will now proceed to inform you that, the day after my arrival at Ribeira Grande, I determined to visit a caldeira of the most extraordinary magnitude and character, and which was said to be about six miles from the town and seated on the vertex of a volcano on the top of the highest mountain between Ponta Del Gada and the northern shore. Its road was represented to me impracticable for horses or asses, I was compelled to depart on foot, accompanied by Mr. Purvis, a gentleman of great geological knowledge, whom I met at Mr. Read's, attended by two guides who affected to know more of the country than I afterwards found they did. But I shall reserve the narrative of this expedition as the subject of my next.

## LETTER XXV.

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### TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.—RIBEIRA GRANDE—HOT AND COLD BATHS.

AS the country immediately around Ribeira is composed of the richest pasture and arable land, I was flattered at the outset of my excursion by the abundance and beauty of the scene, and with the facility with which I was enabled to proceed. In this happy progress, the first phenomenon that struck my attention was a vapour rising from the center of a level field of Indian corn. It was so subtle as to rise from the earth without forming any visible aperture, and so hot as not to allow the hand to remain in its action more than a minute at a time. Learning from the guides that the Hot and Cold Baths were but half a mile distant, and not much out of the line of my intended route, I bent my way thither, and soon perceived the situation of them by the eccentric and extraordinary columns of vapour which they send into the air. On my arrival at the baths I was much gratified to find that they are better attended to than the baths of the Furnas. The



buildings are neat and clean, and the waters possess the most salutary qualities : they have performed miraculous cures ; especially on rheumatic and gouty subjects, and even persons afflicted with the leprosy, who have been sent from Madeira and Lisbon, places where that dreadful disorder is generated by filth and indigence, two subjects of this description were at the baths at the time they were the object of my speculation. The one was recently arrived, the other had been there some time. The contrast was strong and interesting. The humours of the latter had deformed his body and impaired his strength ; every symptom indicated a general disease of the system, and expressed those poisoned traces of imperfect circulation which baffle all medical aid, and appear as the sure prognostic of death. But in the invalid who had benefited by a residence at the baths some months, the waters had commenced their salutary effects in the primary seat of vital motion ; they had set free the juices throughout all the capillaries of the diseased body, insensibly dried up the sores, and enabled the leper to rise from his couch refreshed and rejoicing. In the same manner, when the sap which belongs to the vegetable kingdom is obstructed in its course to the remotest branches of every plant that grows, for want of natural nourishment or artificial invigoration, it is not merely these defrauded branches which perish ;

the trunk itself is speedily encrusted with canker, and consumed to its very root. Even the inanimate mass of matter exists by the same rules. It is some universal though hidden union which holds its substances together; and whenever from any cause, as from that in the lazarus, it is impeded or destroyed, their surfaces become covered with deleterious incrustations, which, in process of time, will dissolve the hardest of them, until their atoms are scattered to the wind. This is a wide digression from my excursion: it is time that I should resume my description.

The obstructions to my journey commenced and multiplied from the moment I left the baths. In fact, the hills I had to pass over were so rugged, and the mountains, which lay between me and the object of my research, so steep and elevated, so convulsed by eruptions, and so split and rent by the earthquakes which chose this as the favorite theatre for their shocks, that I was frequently terrified by the prospect of encountering so many difficulties, and often wished to return without effecting the object of my pursuit. This timid disposition was not a little augmented by the discovery, that the distance infinitely exceeded the accounts I had received of it at Ribeira Grande. After travelling with insuperable difficulty a space of five miles, I had the



mortification to perceive that the guide directed our attention to the summit of a mountain distant at least five miles further off, and separated from us by mountains of smaller magnitude, between which were deep valleys, frightful precipices, yawning chasms, and enormous rocks. Cautiously progressing, however, we at length approached an object of inexpressible grandeur and beauty, and which amply compensated for the toils and disappointments I had undergone. Not that it was the original object of our pursuit which was yet far distant, but seen unexpectedly it had a peculiar charm, and an influence over the mind perhaps more powerful than if it had been the distinct object of research.

Having arrived, as I have just observed, with much fatigue and danger, at the summit of one of the intervening mountains, I perceived a column of white vapour rise from the centre of the cone of a volcano, one side of which by being rent from the summit to the base afforded the means of seeing the vapour rise in several columns or streams, and also served as a passage for the spectator to enter without impediment into the body of the cone or vertex, and there examine and discover the conduct of nature in the formation of volcanic mountains and exhibition of volcanic water. The effect of the grandeur and sublimity of the scene was, on the first instance of

viewing it, somewhat suppressed by awe and apprehension, and also by the influence which the noxious vapours of the boiling water produced on the respiration. The heat, too, was so great as to operate in the manner of a steam, and the ground itself so hot as to make it impossible to stand any time in the same place. But soon gaining strength and resolution from the energy inspired by the grandeur and magnificence of the object, I viewed with delight and astonishment the configuration of the borders, the internal sides, the form of the immense cone, its bottom on which I stood, and its vertex to which I looked up from a depth of about three hundred feet. In the center of this astonishing theatre the boiling water rose as if from several thousand apertures, and to a various height of from six to sixteen feet, tapering off in the regular and beautiful gradation of the ears of a sheaf of wheat, and forming a bason around the base, hot, undulating, and transparent. The circumference of the crater, in which this grand exhibition is displayed to so much advantage, is two hundred and fifty paces, and the vapour which ascends rises with great velocity into the external atmosphere, and forms a relucient cloud over the vertex of the cone. The upper edges of the cone or crater are indented in several places, and the internal sides are inclined at different angles in several parts, and abound with concretions of



diversified colors and fantastic shapes. From what I observed, I considered that the concretions were principally composed of salt and sulphur, and the muriate of ammonia; I also perceived that in the lapse of time the crater has undergone great changes, and that there must have been in it formerly an abyss as well as a funnel: whence it may be deduced that the crater was once infinitely higher, and that its summit or original vertex having been precipitated into the gulf by some terrible eruption or shock, diminished the height of the crater, and blocked up the mouth of the abyss. The constant ebullition and action of boiling water at the bottom of this volcanic abyss makes a noise similar to the waves of a stormy sea, and the vapour which issues from it, when condensed by the cold of an elevated atmosphere, descends in heavy dew to the earth, and preserves it, even in the ardent heat of summer, in the most luxuriant fertility and verdure. Perhaps, too, it is not saying too much, that to the percolation of this dew, formed from this vapour, may be attributed the numerous streams which supply the adjacent region with water. It is not easy to make a calculation of the quantity of water produced by the vapour, but from the numerous columns of water which give rise to it, and from the immense volume of the vapour, it may be conjectured that it composes water at the rate of about ten

tons in a minute. I do not pledge myself for the precision of this calculation; I only mean to say, that as there is no absolute rain in this mountainous region during the burning season of summer, and as the whole region is perpetually verdant and fertile, it is reasonable to conjecture that the vapour produces those springs and powers which alone are capable of giving to verdure and fertility a prolific and permanent effect.

Animated with the vain hope of visiting a phenomenon of greater magnitude and curiosity than that I have just described, I left it, exhilarated with renovated strength, and pursued my way along the bottoms of the deepest valleys and over the summits of the highest mountains, to the final object of my research.

Fatigued, however, myself, and fearful of fatiguing you, I must interrupt my narrative at this interesting part of it.



## LETTER XXVI.

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TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.—PORTO  
FERMOZA.

IN describing the uncommon and grand appearances of nature which abound in this island, it is no part of my intention to address myself to the imagination or to the passions. I intend these letters merely as a vehicle for recording the objects I have seen, and if my history is not enfeebled by restraint, it is because the objects are sublime, and demand that active, vigorous style which alone can make the reader acquainted with their character, and susceptible of the enthusiastic impressions which they are so eminently calculated to produce on the spectator's mind. I make these remarks in consequence of perceiving that I sometimes adopt a manner of writing that gives me the appearance of an author ambitious only of producing effect. Whereas, this manner arises out of the peculiar situations in which I was so often placed. This change of manner may be traced by any man who will pay attention to the operations of his own mind when progressing from objects

of contemptible consideration to those of higher rank, or to such as make the rational powers gather strength both by admiration and exercise. Astonishment is succeeded by admiration, and admiration leads to enthusiasm and investigation. Hence may be assigned one cause for my departing occasionally from that timid restraint which is favorable to the description of the ordinary features of nature. And surely the mind that can read a description of an island like this, with such calmness, as accurately to appreciate its merits and defects, can feel little of that warmth and enthusiasm which such a description is calculated to inspire;—a consideration that would be very mortifying to me, did I not experience, in common with my readers, the difficulty of forming a conception truly sublime, or of soaring to the heights to which this extraordinary region ought to elevate the imagination and the mind.

Having attained the final object of my research, as I observed in the conclusion of my last letter; that is, having reached the high summit in which the principal curiosity of the island was said to reside, I perceived the mouth of a volcano which represented a gently-inclining plain of about half a mile in circumference, and from the center of which arose a conical mass of lavatic matter incrustated with salts and sulphurs of different



colors, or rather a variegated funnel rising from a verdant base, which gave vent to the terrific and unfathomable gulph beneath, and in which is heard the confused noises of boiling and running waters, and a continued hollow murmur like the roaring of the ocean during a violent storm. From this extraordinary aperture issued innumerable columns of boiling water, and immense volumes of sulphurous vapour, which being lighter than the circumambient air, rose with great rapidity, till coming to a more dense atmosphere, it shoots off horizontally, and forms a track in the air according to the direction of the wind; sometimes forming clouds of unusual brilliance, and sometimes resembling in extent and whiteness the milky-way, or rather a pure flame shooting across the skies.

But the principal object of astonishment and instruction of this wonderful region exists in the prospect which it so minutely affords of those dreadful operations of nature, or of those violent efforts of internal fire which has made her exterior appearance so dreadful. From the vertex of the cone the original operation of the first eruption was perfectly discernible. The fire, instead of rushing from the vertex in a direct line as is usual, must have rose to a great height, and then moved in several directions, covering the country around and

laying every thing waste within its range. This description is manifest by the character of the lava in every direction from the volcano. In some places it bears the appearance of rivers or streams issuing from the summit of the crater in different directions, and in other parts it represents an irregular surface studded with huge lavatic rocks according to the power of the explosion and the manner in which the lava was cast forth. The horrid chasms formed by the original eruption are also to be seen, but they baffle description. They form valleys more than three hundred feet deep, and where the fiery matter gained access during the eruption, or eruptions, there exist beds of lava, or little mountains, according as the lava did or did not meet with obstruction in its course. The terrible effects of these fiery streams may, however, be imagined from their amazing extent, and from the mountains which they form in the situations just named. The whole region around is also covered with hardened lava, scoriæ and stones, a proof that the volcano must have been burning for ages without ceasing, and that this greatest wonder of nature might have cast forth its vast torrents of liquid fire, and shot up its fiery rocks and sulphurous smoke to this day, had not an opposite element gained access to the dreadful abyss, and confined its action to the perpetual boiling of waters whose source can be



no other than the sea. I make this assertion from a consciousness that the island does not possess sufficient rivers or fountains to supply the immensity of water which is wasted by the vapour issuing from this volcano, and also from an experience that, notwithstanding the perpetual noise, made up of boiling springs and raging tempests, there was an intermitting roaring which corresponded with the undulation of water advancing to and retiring from fire.

Exhausted by the fatigues of the day, by mephitic vapours and excessive heat, we resolved to pass the night on the periphery of the crater and return the ensuing morning to Ribeira Grande. This night was highly interesting. Several beautiful picturesque effects were produced which were not common to the day. The huge summer clouds, which are formed by the action of the sun on the surrounding ocean, collected round the brim of the vertex and blended their watery bodies with the sulphureous and mineral vapours, which were already like so many other mountains piled up on the top of the volcano. The black stormy clouds, passing swiftly over, and at times covering the whole or a part of the bright column of vapour, at other times clearing away and giving a full view of it, with the various tints produced, by its reverberated light, formed such a scene as no power of art

can express. When the surcharged clouds passed for any time away, the vapour rose in puffs from the vertex as clear as can possibly be imagined, and succeeding each other, hastily increase in volume and rise to the amazing height of five thousand feet in the air, or till their brightness and height are interrupted by clouds of greater density and darker hue. At this interruption, or at the very moment of union between the clouds and the vapour, a bright but pale electric fire is observed playing briskly about in zig-zag lines: a phenomenon probably occasioned by the clouds having acquired a great degree of heat in coming in contact with vapour formed by volcanic fire. At some intervals, when the moon was obscured and when the clouds forced the vapour to roll down the sides of the volcano, there was a mixture of colours in the clouds over the crater, a ruddy dismal light, which augmented the horror of the region, and made a most uncommon and surprizing appearance. While at other intervals, when the electric shocks caused the clouds to disperse, or when the wind was sufficient to carry the clouds from off the summit of the crater, they would retire by degrees and form a black and extensive curtain, which makes the finest contrast imaginable with the splendid vapour which then rises without interruption to the view.

These are the most remarkable circumstances that I



could collect concerning this uncommon subject of natural curiosity: the appearances I have mentioned continued the whole of the night: at the close of which, the scene was entirely changed. No sooner did the sun dispel the clouds than the vapour arose in a conical form, and as the wind was westwardly it directed the vapour to the eastern horizon where the sun gave it the appearance of ignition or clouds of fire, more diversified and beautiful than can possibly be conceived. But it is not easy for those who have never been present at those beautiful operations of nature, to represent to their minds, the grandeur which must attend them. Knowing the vanity and feeling the difficulty of their description, I shall only observe that I left the mountain and returned to Ribeira Grande with a mind filled with the impression that scarcely any thing could be conceived at once more beautiful and more dreadful than the subjects presented to my attention at every step of this excursion, and which are amply sufficient to excite the admiration and to astonish the surrounding nations of the world.

## LETTER XXIV.

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TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.—RIBEIRA  
GRANDE—CALDEIRA THERE HAUNTED—PEASANT'S  
DESCRIPTION OF IT—REMARKABLE TRIAL.

I SHOULD have told you, before I abandoned the subject of the last caldeira I visited, that a portion of my amusement during the night was attending to the accounts which my guide gave me of the spirits of the damned, which are said to be confined by day in the great abyss, and to wander by night within the sphere of the vertex or sulphureous mouth. In short a story has gone abroad among the peasants, for a century past, that the caldeira is haunted, and particularly and notoriously by the ghost of one Gomez, a former governor of St. Michael's, and a villian!—but I shall give you my guide's relation of the affair, and leave the rest to your own discrimination and judgment. Premising, that though my guide was constantly engaged from morning till night in the drudging employment of a common country labourer, still he found leisure to cultivate his understanding, as you will perceive from his narration—such is



the irresistible impulse of genius though borne down by the iron hand of priesthood and poverty.

“ Gomez, whose ghost inhabits this caldeira, was a weak and jealous tyrant, who saw no comeliness in virtue, no deformity in vice; who issued mandates but for the scourge of my countrymen, and who, amidst the luxuries of a palace, forgot the duties of religion, sought the supreme good in the gratification of sensual appetite, and scorned to bend the knee to the Protector of the faithful.

“ The fame of a beautiful nun, immured in one of the convents of Rebeira Grande, reached his ear; and he offered riches and honors to the monk who officiated at the convent, if he would, by force or artifice bring her to his embrace. The monk, a person of desperate fortune and dark intrigue, who had been formerly banished for crimes of the most atrocious nature, committed at Lisbon, threw himself at the feet of Gomez, and promised his service in this hazardous affair. By various stratagems he succeeded in his attempt; and, returning with the inestimable prize, lodged her safe in the apartments of Gomez.

“ The tyrant having accomplished his desires, praised

the fidelity of the monk, on whom he lavished favors with an unsparing hand, and finally raised him to the highest dignities in the Island. In this situation he was suspected of endeavouring to intrigue with the much injured nun. The jealousy and indignation of his master were roused: and, in the first emotions of his anger, he commanded his head to be struck off: but, from political motives, as well as a dread of the supreme court of Lisbon, he changed the sentence to that of imprisonment for life.

“ In the former city of Villa Franca, the ruins of an ancient castle are to be seen, and beneath its foundations were those hideous dungeons where the victims of royal and inquisitorial displeasure, lingered out the remains of a miserable existence. To those regions of sorrow was consigned the infamous monk of Ribeira Grande. In a lonely cell he clanked his heavy chains in darkness, without a witness to his groans and tears. This monk, in the days of his prosperity, had, by arts unknown to generous minds, made himself many friends. Those had not forsaken him in the gloomy season of his adversity. Stimulated by motives, too, of self love and religious zeal, the convent of the nun and the monastery of the monk, exerted themselves in his favor, and they succeeded with the court of Lisbon in restoring him to liberty, and of accepting his evidence against the tyrant Gomez.



“ Gomez was not unacquainted with the prompt system of his court, or with the lenity he was entitled to expect from the Inquisition. He was also conscious of the dark labyrinth of his iniquity, and though he had lost the sense of gratitude and the feelings of humanity, he was not insensible to the approach of degradation and shame. No sooner was the monk restored to liberty and called to Lisbon, than this invader of female chastity, this violator of public peace, and religious obligations, formed the resolution of abdicating his government, and pitching himself into the caldeira, as an atonement for the multitude and atrocity of his sins. Nor is he without company in this fiery gulf, continued the guide. The people who are sent to this place, by way of performing penance, see several ghosts of a night, and hear their cries and lamentations, when, at the appointed hour, they are compelled to plunge into the great abyss.”

Such is the narration of my guide. Now, although I do not mean to say that I place implicit faith in the parts which respect the appearance of the ghost of Gomez and of others, still I will relate a most singular occurrence which was met with by about thirty seamen on the burning mountain of Stromboli, in the year 1687, and which was the cause of a trial in the court of King's Bench. The following is an account of the trial, and

which I had from the port-folio of Sir William Hamilton a gentleman well versed in the history of the principal volcanoes of the globe.

“ Mrs. Booty, *v.* Capt. Barnaby.”

“ This was an action brought by the plaintiff, to recover the sum of £1000 as damages, for the scandal of the defendant's assertion, that he had seen her deceased husband, a receiver, driven into hell !

“ When this extraordinary trial commenced, several witnesses were brought forward who proved the words to have been spoken by Captain Barnaby, and afterwards by his wife. The defence set up was, that the defendant had spoken no more than the truth, no more than had been seen by a number of persons as well as himself; to prove which, the journal books of three different ships were produced in court, and the following passage recorded in each, submitted, amongst others, to the court and jury, by the defendant's counsel.”

Friday, May 15.—We had the observation of Mr. Booty this day: Capt. Barnaby, Capt. Bristow, Capt. Brown, I and Mr. Ball, merchant, went on shore in Capt. Barnaby's boat to shoot rabbits upon Stromboli: and when



we had done, we called several of our men together by us, and about half an hour and fourteen minutes after three in the afternoon, to our great surprize, we all of us saw two men come running towards us with such swiftness, that no living man could run half so fast as they did run; when all of us heard Captain Barnaby say, "Lord bless me, the foremost is old Booty my next door neighbour," but he said he did not know the other who run behind; he was in black clothes, and the foremost was in grey; then Capt. B. desired all of us to take an account of the time, and put it down in our pocket books, and when we got on board we wrote it in our journals, for we none of us heard or saw the like before, and we were firmly convinced that we saw old Booty chased by the devil round Stromboli and then whipped into the flames of Hell!

"After they arrived in England, and were lying at Gravesend, Capt. Barnaby's wife came on board the 6th of October, at which time Capt. B. and Capt. Brown, sent for Capt. Bristow, and Mr. Ball, merchant, to congratulate them on their arrival also, and, after some discourse, Capt. Barnaby's wife started up and said, 'my dear, I will tell you some news; old Booty is dead. Capt. Barnaby directly made answer, 'we all of us saw him running into Hell.'

“Soon afterwards, Mrs. Barnaby told a gentleman of her acquaintance in London, what her husband had said; who acquainted Mrs. Booty with the whole affair; whereupon Mrs. Booty arrested Capt. Barnaby in a thousand pounds action, for what he had said of her husband: Capt. Barnaby gave bail to it, and it came to trial in the court of King's Bench. Mr. Booty's wearing apparel was brought into court, and the sexton of the parish, and the people that were with him when he died. The journals were then sworn to, and the time when the two men were seen, and Booty died, coincided within about two minutes; ten of the seamen swore to the buttons on his coat, and that they were covered with the same sort of cloth of which his coat was made: and so it proved.

“The jury asked Mr. Spinks whose hand writing appeared in the journal that was read, if he knew Mr. Booty? He answered, I knew him well, and am satisfied I saw him hunted on the burning mountain and plunged into the pit of hell which lies under the summit of Stromboli.' The judge immediately made use of the following extraordinary expressions, ‘Lord have mercy upon me! and grant that I may never see what you have seen—one, two, or three may be mistaken, but thirty never can be mistaken.’

The Widow lost her cause



Thus, you perceive that one of your chief courts of justice records a case similar to the tradition of my guide. The only use, however, we can make of either is to shew that such subjects relate to volcanoes in general, and that their sublimity and terrific grandeur dispose the mind to superstition, and expose the judgment to a perversion that can hardly be conceived or accounted for. In forming an opinion of this correspondence, therefore, I again express a hope, that you will suffer your imagination, at times, to abandon the ordinary objects and peaceable convictions of your fire side, and to conceive yourself a witness of the events and circumstances related in this narrative. Imagine yourself a spectator of the scene; that you see the fiery column, the boiling water, and sulphureous vapour spring from the ignited gulf; that you sink under heat and apprehension and often find the steaming earth tremble beneath your feet, conceive all this, and you will not only assume capacity to appreciate my descriptions, but enthusiasm sufficient to induce further inquiries into the subject.

## LETTER XXVIII.

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TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.—RIBEIRA GRANDE—CHARACTER OF THE PADRE GUARDIAN OF THE SAINT FRANCISCANS—PLATONIC LOVE OF THE NUNS.

ON my return to Ribeira Grande, I resumed, by invitation, my solitary apartment at my friends the Saint Franciscans. In the morning when I awoke, I revolved in my mind all the wonders I had witnessed the preceding eight and forty hours. Wearied and exhausted with numerous reflections, I at length arose, and looked out into a garden on the east side of the monastery. The pure air, wafting the fragrant odours of the herbs and flowers, in part dispelled the clouds that enveloped my imagination; I felt my body acquire new strength, and my heart animated by reviving vigour. While my eyes wandered over the garden, and while I observed with equal pleasure and admiration the elegance and simplicity with which it was laid out, I perceived the old Padre Guardian, the master of the monastery who had so kindly received me, busily employed, among the shrubs and flowers, in



rural labors, on which I imagined he never deigned to bestow a thought. The desire I felt to explain to him all the wonders I witnessed during my tour, induced me to come down into the garden, and enter into conversation with the old man. After I had returned him my thanks for the hospitable and polite entertainment I had met with in his monastery, I proceeded to enquire respecting the city he inhabited, and to enter into some disquisition with him concerning the objects I had so lately contemplated. From the Padre's recluse way of life, spent principally within the walls of his convent, I could gain little intelligence worth the reporting. I must, however, do him the justice to allow that the native powers of his mind were considerably superior to those of monks in general, and his character exhibited a rare union of moral qualities, and his character and disposition peculiarly adapted him to the church. To great sanctity he added greater candour. His knowledge of religion consisted in a familiar acquaintance with those principles which extensive reading and a long experience had impressed upon his mind, rather than in a reliance on the *dicta* of the rules of his order. But his application of general principles was seldom erroneous; for, as his apprehension was clear and his judgment strong, he embraced the most complicated variety of religious facts, and discerned the bearings of their effects on society. As he comprehended with

precision, he explained with perspicuity, and perhaps no man ever performed the arduous task of Guardian Priest more usefully, and more satisfactorily to the parties concerned, than he did. During a long conversation with him, I found his judgment sound, his understanding vigorous, his reasoning cogent, his illustration apposite, his language manly and not unfrequently eloquent. And I learnt afterwards, that his clerical deportment was calculated to convey an impression of awe and respect. His manner was grave and punctilious, yet it was marked with great courtesy; for it was not dictated by pride, but by a conscientious regard for the dignity of his religion. Nor, amidst the amiable qualities which distinguish the life of this truly good man, should be unrecorded his warm and affectionate attachment to the English, his prompt and active zeal to promote the welfare of every British stranger, that chanced to visit his hospitable and liberal establishment. The nephew of Admiral Purvis, whose indisposition detained him on the Island, had been on visits to him several weeks, and when he returned nearly dead from the excursion, I took him to the caldeiras, he was received with open arms, and solicited to remain till restored to health through the instrumentality of the waters in the neighbourhood, and which were deemed infallible and capable of the consummation of every cure.



I returned from the garden with the Padre to breakfast, and passed the most considerable part of the day in visiting the convents and rambling about the town. It ranks next to Ponta del Gado, and is large and populous, but in consequence of the harbour having been destroyed by the shock of an earthquake its commercial consequence is annihilated or removed to the South side. Like Villa Franca and Porto Fermoza, religion, or rather the appearance of religion, supplies the place of business, and keeping the whole of the community in a state of bustle and fermentation both day and night. You will not be surprized at this when you learn, that a church or a chapel, or a convent, is a place of exhibition for the rich, a theatre of amusement for the poor, a temple of sacrifice for the idolatrous, and a hosue of intrigue for the licentious and impure. This last impious profanation takes its origin from the jealousy of the Portuguese, who seclude their wives and daughters from the observation of the world, and seldom suffer them to be seen but in going to and at church. In consequence of this, churches and chapels are made the common place of rendezvous, where billet-doux are exchanged, assignations made, and hands pressed. Thus does the church supply the place of theatre, ball-room and brothel. And to so public a degree does it answer the latter purpose, that a lady who proposes an intrigue with a stranger will send him word by a favorite duenna that

she frequents a certain church at a certain hour every day. But the places where intrigues are conducted on a principle unknown to the rest of the world is at the female convents; I say different, because every nun, celebrated for wit or beauty, not only possesses a lover, but boasts of her possession; corresponds with him publicly and sends him presents of preserved fruits, artificial flowers, and rings and ornaments composed of her own hair. Never was love carried on in a more *con amore* manner. The lover daily attends at the grate, the nun converses with him for hours, and the parting is often attended with that effusion of sentiment which is the true characteristic of impassioned hearts. And yet these tender lovers are perpetually separated by two iron gates, and continue attached to each other though conscious that they can never experience any other than the delights of a mental intercourse. At least I could never learn that it is possible to gain access to a nunnery, nor is it at all understood that the nuns, who enjoy this platonic intercourse with the men, are by any means of perverted judgment or depraved mind. The publicity with which this intercourse is conducted is even a testimony of the purity of the heart. A nun whose affections are not engaged, and who sees, among the visitors at the grate, a person whom she thinks she could esteem, will lead him into conversation, and possibly ask him whether he would



not be her "amigo" and whether, if he became her friend, he would be faithful to her for life? Where a connection of this nature is formed it is preserved inviolate on the part of the nun. I met with but one instance of a breach of compact on the part of a lady, and that was at the convent I visited at Ribeira Grande. And this instance is so interesting and extraordinary, that I am convinced you will esteem it worthy of being recorded.

A young lieutenant of an English frigate which had been some time on the station of the Western Islands, was the "Meo amigo," of Donna Laurino, the most beautiful nun that had ever inhabited the convent of Ribeira Grande. So beautiful that the attachment of the lieutenant was real, and when his Frigate was ordered to escort a convoy to Newfoundland the separation was mutually excruciating and mutually softened by vows of constancy and love. During the absence of this favored lover, an English brig of war arrived on the station, and reported that the frigate had been ordered to Madeira and that there was no probability of its returning to the Azores any more. This calamitous news was conveyed to Laurino, and unfortunately by an officer of the brig who became enamoured with this lovely captive, and who, therefore, sought every means to gain her affections and to alleviate her grief. To effect this last purpose,

or rather to employ the strongest agency he possibly could over a Portuguese mind, he made Laurino believe that her lover was false; that he adored a nun in a convent at Madeira, and had entirely discarded her from his heart. Laurino became the victim of this treachery. She exchanged vows, she corresponded with her deceiver, and at the end of a few months, her first, her favored, her faithful lover arrived? He wrote to her from Ponto del Gada Roadstead, and he received the following answer, which explains, in a beautiful and affecting manner, the origin of her grief and the enthusiasm of her love.

“ O afflicted and forsaken expectant! You tell me that you long to see me, and that you still preserve your attachment for me.

“ But you ought not to depend on the promises of beauties; you ought not to set your heart on their assurances. I have deceived you, but, believe Laurino, I have been cruelly deceived. Having deceived you, I can see you no more, and as your rival has acted in a manner so repugnant to reason and so revolting to humanity, I shall see him no more: no more believe—

Laurino.”



I need not tell you that a woman capable of writing with so much truth and sentiment preserved her word inviolate. But I must conclude for the moment with the usual assurance of being &c.

## LETTER XXIX.

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TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.—RIBEIRA  
GRANDE—DESCRIPTION OF A MONASTIC CONCERT—  
EDUCATION OF THE NUNS.

WE read in ancient story, that in the most polished court of the most refined period, a reward was proclaimed to him, who should invent a new pleasure. This may justly be styled the last wretched effort of bungling and despairing luxury. The great desideratum is at length found by the citizens of Ribeira Grande. A pleasure which absorbs the whole soul ; a pleasure in which there is no satiety ; which cloy not by use, but gains new vigour from enjoyment. The vulgar only need to be informed, that the pleasure here alluded to, is that primitive, that platonic tenderness which formed the substance of my last letter to you.

Having had to remain a few days at Ribeira Grande, I had an opportunity of discovering that religion and love are the main and leading articles which compose both the business and amusement of the place. The refined and



virtuous passion of love and the enthusiastic affections of religion possess an influence that sinks every other consideration and makes this singular people regardless of all the more varied pleasures of fashionable worlds. These reflections principally took their rise from a concert to which I was invited by my friend, the Padre Guardian of the Saint Franciscans. I accompanied him to the principal nunnery or convent, where the concert was to be held. Numerous spectators occupied the chapel, and the orchestra of the performers was in front of the large hall or study of the nuns, raised about 20 feet above the level of the chapel, and separated from it, but not obscured, by a range of iron bars. The performers consisted exclusively of nuns. They were thirty in number, and besides the instruments common to their sex, they played on violins, French horns, and flutes. The instrumental was judiciously supported by vocal music; and were it not that the general effect was somewhat injured to an English eye by the appearance of flutes and violins in female hands, the concert might be said to be enchanting. There was one scene which was peculiarly delightful. Between the grand divisions of the concert, a principal singer advanced towards the iron bars in front of the audience, and, on the unfolding of a gate in the center of the bars, sung a hymn, the chorus of which was maintained by the whole body of the nuns, who were seated on semi-

circular benches behind the orchestra. On the appearance of each of these lovely creatures the audience manifested an extraordinary degree of pleasure and admiration ; not, however, in shouting and clapping of hands, but it could be seen, that the colour glowed in their cheeks, that their hearts throbbed with joy, and that they listened to the lovely air as one would to the midnight song of the nightingale. The theatrical features of this scene, were considerably heightened by the manner in which it was conducted. I shall describe a scene or two exactly as they were performed.

The back ground from which the nun advances is rather dark : so dark that the audience cannot distinguish whether it is their favorite or not. I shall now allude to a particular nun. As she approached a gentle gleam of light broke softly through the gloom, and exposed a being of angelic form to the sight of an audience who were as silent as if all nature were hushed to repose, and dreaded to disturb the melody of such an angel. On drawing near, and at the moment of the unfolding of the iron gate, she threw up her veil, and disclosed a countenance full of sweetness and composure ; such a mixture, as arises from prudence and innocence united. She nevertheless sighed, and remained longer than usual silent : her eyes glancing on that part of the audience



where myself and some other English visitors were anxiously attending to hear her voice. Never did I behold such a countenance, and when she began to sing, her beauty seemed to receive fresh lustre, and every eye dwelt upon her with complacency and delight. When this interesting being had ceased and retired, the name of "Laurino" was uttered with a degree of adoration, and with an increased sentiment because of her story which was conveyed in the allegory of her song: a song composed by herself for the occasion, and which at once proved the powers of her genius, the sensibility of her heart, and the character of her misfortunes.

The next personage who approached the grate formed a striking contrast to the being I have just described. Laurino was in full bloom; and it could be perceived that she discovered a solicitousness to please in spite of her seeming negligence of her dress and the vocation to which she was condemned. Her dress according to her order consisted of a grey frock, with a loose black robe all over it, open in the front and exposing the form to sight, ornamented with the cross and other holy emblems of the order. Her head-dress consisted of a cap calculated rather to confine than to hide the hair, over which was cast a long white veil, which gave the entire costume a graceful and elegant appearance. But the

nun who succeeded Laurino, came on with a perturbed and melancholy step: she wore a black veil, and black robe closed all round her, through which, nevertheless, it was easy to observe an uncommon dignity in all her motions. The sweet appearance of Laurino was as pleasing, as the awful presence of this nun was distressing. Her looks as she lifted her veil, gave a check to every pleasurable transport. Some violent convulsions of nature had discomposed them, and yet there was that exquisite charm of sensibility in her appearance which courted affection, and made the longing eyes of the spectators chide the calamity which faded her frame and denied her power to sing. With passions all at variance, and a mind inattentive to all surrounding objects, she first knelt, and then cast herself prostrate on the ground—not with a violent, but with such a character of devout compunction and divine meditation as could not be more feelingly expressed by a saint from Heaven. Had elemental fire struck the audience, they could not have risen up with a more general impulse than they did on this occasion. Every person with great vehemence called upon the blessed virgin, and upon all the host of saints, to pardon and to comfort the sufferer then lying prostrate at the throne of Grace. Cheered by this expression of love and sensibility in the audience, the fear and anguish of the amiable sufferer gave way to resolution of soul: she



rose, and, after a short pause, performed the part assigned to her in the concert with a pathos and dignity, with a superior grace which should alone emanate from a virtuous mind. And yet, I had the mortification to learn, on enquiry immediately after the concert, that her life teems with guilt and infamy. That she is a wretched outcast from her community, sunk into that most dreadful of all human conditions, the acknowledgment that she merits the execration and contempt of the world. Her conduct blackened by every aggravation that can make it either odious or contemptible, and unrelieved by any single circumstance of mitigation that could palliate its guilt, or retrieve it from abhorrence. Foremost in cruelty, in determination and in stratagem, was a young Franciscan when he first conceived an infamous passion for the ill-fated subject of my pen. This noxious energy of character raised him from the low situation of a mendicant monk to be first chaplain or chief director of the convent in which his intended victim was immured. Having first debauched her mind, he next violated her person, and for fear the fruits of so illicit an amour might bring both criminals to condign punishment, he prevailed upon her to take drugs proper to produce abortion, but which failing, he compelled her to strangle it at its birth. The doctor of the convent, however, although he acted as confederate with the chaplain in disguising the true

nature of the illness of the nun from the mother abbess, shewed an honorable indignation on learning the fate of the child. He informed the corregidor, who sent him to the seat of government at Tercera to be tried ; but the governor of Tercera, not willing to imbrue his hands in the blood of a priest, sent him to the government of Lisbon, and that government sent him to the supreme court of the Brazils, where he will no doubt be acquitted from want both of evidence and inclination to substantiate his crimes. In the mean while the wretched victim of this Tarquin's lust remains in the convent with the threat of execution suspended over her head, and though excluded from the society of her sisters, is compelled to perform with them in their public devotions and concerts, and dressed in a manner that denotes the commission of crime and the urgency of repentance and shame.

As there is much of this letter which conveys a higher notion of the sensibility and intelligence of the convents than what I have hitherto given you reason to expect they possess, I must here remark that the education of the nuns is cultivated here with the most assiduous care. The convents of this island are not mere places of negative seclusion, they are, on the contrary, seminaries of the first discipline and best education. Masters of languages, music, and drawing daily attend, and communicate in-



struction correctly though separated from their disciples by two iron railed gates. In this respect I know of no convents under better regulations, nor have I seen any where the nuns are so generally interesting and so highly cultivated. Many of them speak the principal of the continental languages, and all of them are skilled in music and the principles of drawing, and designing paper flowers and patterns for lace.

I must now pursue my journey ; you want a topographic not an amatory account of the Islands : but as religion and love are the sole objects of business and amusement in Ribeira Grande, it would have been unpardonable in me to pass over those objects, and so deny you the means of forming a just estimate of the character and manners of the place.

## LETTER XXX.

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TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED.—DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY FROM RIBEIRA GRANDE TO THE VALE DAS CETE CETADES.

IT is an inexpressible satisfaction to a liberal mind, to be employed in revealing the unknown beauties of a country, or the latent merits of a people ; and I lament, that I have not more frequent opportunities of indulging my heart in this pleasure. This makes me lay hold on the first occasion of this kind, with impatience, to tell you how gratified I was to find, on my departure from Ribeira Grande, for the Vale das Sete Cetades, that the country improved in an astonishing degree, and, in a route of thirty miles along the coast presented no vestige of eruption, if I except the Ribeira Seca and the volcanic mountains, of which it is impossible to lose the view. Ribeira Seca was a navigable river till the shock of an earthquake opened a portion of its bed near the source, since when its waters supply those subterranean caldeiras I have mentioned, and the entire bed of the river is now perfectly and perpetually dry. Leaving Ribeira Seca, I continued my journey



through vineyards, orange gardens, and highly cultivated corn and pasture lands; passing through, at the same time, the beautiful villages of Rabo de Peyxæ, Boa Viagem, Lugar das Fanais, Cappellas, Anthonio, Moinhos, Ajuda, and Lugar da Bretanha: a circuitous route it is true, but one, which, for neatness of accommodation and rich and picturesque scenery cannot be excelled in any country whatever. Besides, I intended returning from the Sete Cetades directly over the mountains to Ponta del Gada, and therefore varied my design and augmented my information by travelling along the coast. It was not till I had left Lugar da Bretanha that difficulties began to present themselves. I found the mountain lying between Bretanha and the Cetades insuperably difficult. It was entirely lavatic, consequently rugged, and rent in many places into gulfs and chasms. But on arriving at the summit I considered myself amply rewarded for all the inconvenience I had sustained. The view was infinitely beautiful. It consisted of the Vale das Cetades, and of the Great and Azul Lakes, surrounded by mountains two thousand feet high, formed by the very eruptions which excavated the valley, and which constructed the bed of the lakes. It appears, at the first sight, incontrovertibly evident, that there existed three volcanos within the space of these moun-

tains, and which space is about ten miles in circumference. And it also is equally evident that the volcanos, from a principle of absorption, or from a general eruption, caused by the introduction of water into the fiery abyss to which they owed their birth, fell into the abyss from which they rose, and allowed lakes and pasture grounds ultimately to assume their place. The pasture ground in the vale is the richest in the island, and the lands on the banks of the lakes are peculiarly adapted to the growth of hemp or flax. They are also eminently calculated for curing and preserving the hemp, and the quantity so cultivated and cured affords employment and bread to thousands. There are but half a dozen houses in the vale, and these are occupied by the persons who cultivate the hemp. But the vale and the banks of the lakes could afford accommodation and labour for several thousands, and produce as much hemp as would meet all the demands of the English market. The hemp at present produced is manufactured by the inhabitants of Britanha and the neighbouring villages, and is said to amount to 50,000 yards employed for domestic purposes, and for the exportation of such pulse as cannot be shipped in bulk: that is, this native linen is converted into sacks which hold but two bushels of caravanches, and as several ships take



upwards of a thousand bags each, it may be understood what a demand there must be for the article. The reason that the vale and the banks of the lakes are not more inhabited is, that the Portuguese are passionately fond of the sun, and cannot endure a situation where it rises at eleven, and sets at three o'clock. In fact, so high are the mountains that the stars are seen on the surface of a certain portion of the Lake Azul in the noon day, and the surface has never been known to be ruffled—not even at times when the trees on the summits of the surrounding mountains have been torn by the tempests up by the roots. Than the lakes themselves it is impossible to conceive any thing more beautiful. With neither wind to ruffle, nor clouds to obscure the resplendency of their surface, they appear under the happy circumstances of a perfect calm, reflecting the bursting lights of the vistas on their banks, and the tremulating branches of the trees on the summit of their borders. And if an artificial mirror, a few feet long, placed opposite to a door or a window, occasions often very pleasing reflections, how noble must be the appearance of these lakes, where an area, of many miles in circumference, is formed into two vast mirrors, and these mirrors surrounded by a combination of great and beautiful objects. The majestic repose of so grand, so solemn, and splendid,

a scene, I must confess created in my mind a sort of enthusiastic calm, which spread a mild complacency over my breast; a tranquil pause of mental operation which may be felt, but not described. When I had a little recovered from this tone, from the general impression of such a scene, I took a new pleasure in examining more minutely the several picturesque ingredients which produced it; the stillness and the purity of the air; the strong lights and shades; the tints upon the mountains; the polish of the lake, groups of cattle in various parts along the banks, and flocks of birds forming tremulous reflections from their agile wings, added new life and beauty to so still a scene, and made it an object more highly adapted to the pencil than any I had ever beheld.

The banks for a considerable way up the volcanic mountains are covered with verdure, and trees produced without culture, here straggle single, and there crowd into little groves and bowers. These, added to clear streams winding through long and beautiful valleys, with other circumstances peculiar to the lakes, render them pre-eminently beautiful, and particularly favorable to romantic leisure and tender passions. And I do not fear to predict, that if ever this island becomes the



favorite resort of the British; the Vle das Sete Cetades will be considered by them as the arcadia of the Western Isles. There is also this advantage in its situation; volcanic eruptions and violent earthquakes have already exhausted all their powers there, and have no longer any domination over the region of the lakes. The bed of the lakes has been excavated by eruptions, and the lavatic mountains which once occupied the bed of the lakes, have sunk by absorption occasioned by earthquakes. The introduction of water, by the same powerful agency, has extinguished the force of the subterranean fire, and served as a perpetual solvent to those materials which serve to ignite metallic and sulphurous substances, and consequently to convulse the whole system of nature. It however appears, from a recent fact, that the fire which once existed under the lakes is not extinguished, but driven, by the sudden introduction of water into the vortex of the volcanos which once occupied the place of the lakes, into the subterraneous caverns which it would appear exist under the bed of the adjacent ocean. The evidence of this extraordinary assertion I have described to you in a former letter; that is, it is sufficiently evinced in a volcano which has burst forth from the bottom of the sea, and in the short space of two months has thrown

up a cone, or rather a mountain eighty fathoms high, the vertex of which is so near the surface of the water as to occasion breakers in the manner of the sea over a sunken rock. Thus has the region of the lakes nothing to fear either from convulsion or from absorption: but I find I cannot conclude their history in this letter.



## LETTER XXXI.

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TOUR THROUGH ST. MICHAEL'S CONTINUED—DESCRIPTION OF THE INHABITANTS OF CETE CETADES AND THEIR EMPLOYMENTS.

IT is surprising to consider, how local national characters are, and how deeply engrained those characters appear in the different inhabitants of the different parts of the earth; as if the very climates had as powerful an influence over the qualities of men, as they are known to have over the virtues of plants. The introducing a new race into a country confirms this observation; the native customs, manners, and tempers of the northern swarms were, by degrees, assimilated to those of the people they conquered. So that, in this respect, we may resemble men to vines: transplant the one or the other, and for a while they retain their original character; but, in time, they degenerate or improve; acquiring the properties of the soil into which they are transplanted.

So is it with the region of the Lakes. It is the only portion of the earth, I have ever met with, inhabited by

a people without vices, without prejudices, without wants, without dissensions. Born under the finest skies, nourished by the fruits of a land fertile without culture; ruled by fathers of families rather than by kings, they acknowledge no other domination than love and devotion. Their villages, which are numerous, occupy the arable lands which encompass two thirds of the mountains which bound the Lakes. The houses are neatly built of lavatic stone but do not abound in furniture, and in many a mattress of rushes serve the peaceable inhabitants to sleep on. In their customs they approach nearer to the Moors than to the continental Portuguese. The women particularly hold their arms upright to their ears and sit on the ground in a Moorish posture. The men employ themselves daily in their vineyards, orange gardens, and corn lands, and the youth were fully employed in drying, breaking, scratching, and kicking the flax to fit it for spinning, while the women were occupied in spinning and reeling it, to fit it for weaving, and in weaving, cutting and finishing the cloth for the markets.

Knowing the importance of the subject to Great Britain, I was determined to make myself acquainted with the hemp produce, and shall here give you the result of my enquiries. The usual size of the plant is



six feet, but is sometimes more than ten on the banks of the lakes, and its circumference three inches. It does not require the richest land. The poorer the land the finer the quality but the less in quantity. It is known to be ripe by its inclination to a yellow colour. This is about ten weeks after its sowing. After being pulled and freed from its leaves, seeds, and lateral branches, it is made up into bundles to be steeped in water. Hence the banks of the Lakes present a peculiar advantage to the cultivator. But I find the same end is sometimes attained by *dew-rotting*, for those who grew hemp in situations distant from water, expose the stalks to the night air. And as the dews of the island are abundant and strong, it would appear that any and every part of the Island would answer the important purpose of growing hemp. When the hemp is thoroughly rotted which is usually at the end of three or four days, the operation of reeding commences. This is done in one or two ways; either dyeing and breaking the plant, or pulling out the reed from every stalk with the hand.

When reeded, they cleanse the hemp of the glutinous matter with which it is its nature to abound. This they do by pouring water through it and pressing out the water after effusion; taking care not to let the threads twist or entangle each other. The hemp is next broken

and beat. This labour is performed by the hand. In Russia and Sweden it is done by a water-mill, which raises three heavy beaters that fall alternately: but the Portuguese are not imitators and they never exert their own invention—The finer it is required to make the tow, the more beating is necessary.

The coarser kinds of hemp are employed for making cordage; the finer being used for cloth, which, though incapable of receiving the delicacy of linen, is incomparably stronger, equally susceptible of bleaching, and possessed of the property of improving its colour by wear. The hemp of this island is much superior in strength to that which grows in any other country I have seen, and the finer cloth manufactured from it is worn by the natives in shirts, jackets and trowsers, and looks extremely well to the eye. When any considerable quantity is wanted for sackings, it is necessary to send a person round the islands, or at least to the principal places where the cloth is manufactured, but, where the demand is not considerable, it can be supplied at Ponta del Gada on the market days where it is brought in pieces on the backs of asses and sold, according to its quality, from five to ten pence per yard.

I go into a detail on this article because I am well



acquainted with the importance of hemp to Great Britain, and that it is in fact a considerable article of its commerce. The cordage and sails of a first rate ship of war, are said to consume 180,000 lbs of rough hemp. In the year 1788, to my knowledge, the quantity imported into England was 58,464 tons; which, at £20 per ton, amounts to £1,269,280, and which, at an average product of one-fifth of a ton per acre, requires 292,320 acres for its growth. Nor is this the evil. In case of a rupture with Russia, as in the present instance, England is shut out from her maritime supplies, or else has to obtain them at such a price and under such difficulties as make the undertaking ruinous and often too precarious for the exigency of the demand. Besides it should not be said by England, that she is to beg her supplies from her enemies. Her supplies should be within her own control. And how can that be when only two of our counties, Sussex and Suffolk, produce a small quantity of hemp, and when the importation from the East Indies and America is equally inconsiderable?—If these islands were dependent on Great Britain this question would at once be answered. From what I have stated, it is evident that the soil and climate are eminently propitious to the growth of hemp, and from the quantity of acres eligible for this purpose in the one particular region I have described, of the vale and the lakes, there

can be no hesitation in asserting that there are in this island 1,000,000 of acres proper for the same purpose, which, at one-fourth of a ton per acre, the average here would furnish Great Britain with 250,000 tons of hemp, if she required that quantity, and make her for ever independent of those markets which are subject to the control of an enemy, and to the vicissitudes and fluctuations occasioned by war.

Led away by the consequence of this subject, I have omitted a few observations I made on the lakes. The water is perfectly pure and gelid, and is inhabited by a numerous family of gold or Chinese fish, the original stock of which, consisting of four, were put into the lake by the Dutch consul resident at Ponta del Gada. The reason that the gold fish only are to be found in the lake is, that all the lakes having been formed by volcanic eruptions could have no aboriginal fish, and the gold fish being easily imported in globular glasses caused them to be preferred to any other. No doubt if other fish could be imported with equal facility they would multiply and flourish in a similar manner. Indeed such is the nature of the water, air, and soil, that exotics of every description not only multiply but improve. In the vale, and on the banks of the lakes in particular, the birds sing with uncommon powers, and the shrubs and flowers,



instead of bearing the appearance of sickly exotics; display their tints with a brilliancy and fragrance which shew them congenial to the soil. It is the same with living nature. The ox, the ass, and the hog, though derived from the miserable breed of Portugal grow here to a stature unknown to any other country. As do also poultry of every description. Even man undergoes a change which is hardly credible. The continental Portuguese have as many ill qualities as these their descendants have good ones. They are universally unpolished, brutal, and ignorant; guilty of the most despicable treachery; cruel to a degree; not sparing even their own brother, if his death will turn out any thing to their advantage. Their bodies meagre, and badly proportioned, their features irregular, and their complexion tawny. Looking upon labour as mean and unmanly, they make their women and slaves perform all the necessary drudgeries of life. Whereas the exotic Portuguese, the inhabitants of the island, differ entirely from their ancestors in their persons, tempers, and principles. Their bodies are tall and well proportioned, their features are mild and regular, their complexion inclined to florid. They are naturally industrious, and employ themselves daily in the hardest labours. They are by no means unskilful in the practical part of agriculture, and are acquainted with several methods of breeding and nourishing their cattle,

which the continental Portuguese are entirely ignorant of.—I have said that every exotic improves. I must qualify this by a singular fact. No venomous reptile can exist in the island. Various experiments and attempts have been made to introduce them, but all in vain. The climate soon incapacitates them from biting, and after an appearance of suffocation they shortly shrink up and die. Or if they live for any time, their venom loses its malignity, and they become inoffensive, and may be handled without the least dread or hesitation. The horned viper from the Brazils, of a nature the most inveterate of all vipers, existed in the island about three months, during which time, experiments were tried for the purpose of ascertaining the degeneracy of his venom. In the first instance a chicken died from his bite in the space of ten minutes, but the time gradually increased to hours and days, till at length the bite ceased to communicate poison, and only inflicted a small wound. The American Consul also confined some toads in an inclosure in his garden at the Furnas, they lived but a short time, and yet, before their death, they became as little a nuisance as common frogs.—I feel I have fallen into a tedious digression, but as it naturally arose out of the subject I was on, I trust that it will meet with excuse.



## LETTER XXXII.

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### GENERAL REMARKS ON THE CLIMATE OF ST. MICHAEL'S.

A TASK, lightly taken up, is generally as lightly laid aside; or, at least, remissly performed. I did not attempt to open this correspondence, without having, a considerable time beforehand, examined the integrity and resolution of my own heart; the two main qualifications in a work of this nature. Hence it is, that in the topics, which are of the greatest moment, I have observed a method which I had planned out to myself from the beginning. For this reason likewise, in treating of the various subjects, which have fallen under my consideration, I have endeavoured to preserve the dignity of an historical character: neither yielding to unmanly levity, on the one hand, nor to an unsociable austerity on the other: neither approving one object, nor condemning another, any farther than I thought was justifiable upon the principles of truth and virtue, and the plain notions of common sense.

Such were the determinations and sentiments which directed my pen while I gave you an account of my excursions round the Island : for I should have told you that I completed my tour by returning from the Vale of the Lakes to Ponto del Gada by the way of the coast, and took up my abode once again in the hospitable mansion of Mr. Read.

I have hitherto declined dilating upon the climate, but now, with an improved knowledge, aided by the experience of so intelligent an observer as Mr. Read, I feel myself competent to the undertaking. The climate is so remarkably fine, that those persons who have emigrated from countries where subsistence can only be obtained by a constant stretch of their faculties, are astonished to find that they can maintain life here almost without exertion, and feel every pleasure of the senses lavished with a profusion of which they could form no idea. With the exception of the winter, which is only known by heavy rains which fall between December and February, the climate may be said to consist of but one season, a summer tempered by sea breezes, and refreshed by dews of the most nutritious and prolific quality. As the salubrity of the climate and the healthy and prolific quality of the soil may thus justly be attributed to that dew or dense vapour which so abundantly falls upon the



Island when the sun is below the horizon, it may be proper to form a just understanding of the climate, and to enter into a short disquisition on the subject. The dew here is not only composed of watry particles, but likewise of those valuable, sulphureous, oily, and saline particles which abound in the volcanic regions, in the vapour of the caldeiras and on the surface of the lavatic grounds: these, by the power of the solar rays are carried upon the air and fill that part of it which lies nearest to the surface of the earth, till the solar heat begins to remit, and allows it to descend, and to cover, and refresh the face of the earth in the manner of falling showers. Those who do not know the nature of dew, may consider these observations in the light of a wild theory. But I would ask such, do they not know, that in gravel-pits, and in high, dry, healthy grounds of a large extent, there is collected but a small quantity of this vapour, and that of a watery salutary nature, whilst that which is collected about standing waters, fens, marshes, and fat bituminous grounds, is of a quite different quality, and not only pernicious to vegetation, but very often destructive to mankind. I would ask again, do they not know that some dew that has been collected in a certain part of the earth, has afforded a liquor by distillation, which struck the colours of the rainbow upon glass, not to be effaced by friction, alkaline lixivium, or aqua-regia: it also

burnt like spirits of wine? I would also ask, do they know, that some distilled dew, having been digested with a gentle heat for eight days, and then rectified six times over, till it was exceedingly subtle, broke three glass vessels successively, though it still remained perfectly insipid? The nature of dew then, it must be allowed, differs surprisingly with the different seasons of the year, the various succession of meteors, and with the quality of substances exposed to the action of the sun which produces it. Hence, if the bituminous swamps of the Amazons, abounding with putrified fish, and other animals, produce a dew infectious and destructive to life, it follows that the saline and pure mineral waters of this island, together with the mineral and metalline substances which cover its surface, must constitute a dew favorable to vegetation, and an atmosphere calculated to preserve and strengthen the principles of animal life. These mineral, aqueous, and metalline exhalations also account for the uniform warmth of this climate. For the atmosphere is warm in proportion to the quantity of such exhalations as these as it contains. The lungs being the prime agents of all the functions of the body, and the welfare of the lungs depending greatly upon the purity of the matter they inhale, the air, then, by which they are surrounded, must be of the utmost importance to health. But air, philosophically so called, cannot be impure; of the fluid that we



breathe, only one fourth or less is air, the remaining three parts or more, are composed of the particles which float in the air: it is this compound atmosphere, therefore, that is of so much importance, and its healthiness is governed by the natural circumstances which I have just named in my observations on the formation of dew. On this alone its purity depends. The atmosphere of this island is impregnated with sulphureous, saline, and metalline particles; it is consequently healthy and salubrious. Were it filled with particles of a contrary nature, particles derived from stagnated waters and putrescent substances, it would deposit unwholesome damps, and spread pernicious effluvia. In short the state of the atmosphere is governed by adventitious circumstances, but particularly by the substances which are exposed more particularly to the sun's continued action. The bilious fever, that great calamity of America, is produced by the stagnated state of its water and soil, and the endemical or epidemic disorders of Lincolnshire and Essex owe their origin to the fens and marshes with which they abound. Now, in this island there is no one impurity which affects the atmosphere about it, and it possesses through its mineral waters and volcanic remains the best possible particles for the composition of an atmosphere proper for animal life. From these facts, if there exist

no other of a stronger nature, let those, who have any influence over the lot of their fellow-creatures, remember, that no consideration is more worthy of their benevolence or of their wisdom than an improvement of the atmosphere of the places in which they respectively reside. Let them believe this physical truth: "from the puddle of the beggar, sickness and death arise to desolate their palaces." That an atmosphere is capable of improvement is also strongly proved by the history of Lake Avernus. This spot which lies near Baie, in Campania, was famous among the ancients for its baneful qualities. In the days of Strabo, black, aged groves, stretching their boughs over its waters, excluded every ray of wholesome light; and mephitic vapours, ascending from the hot bowels of the earth, denied a passage to the upper atmosphere, and floated in poisonous mists along the surface. Here it was that superstition, by the hands of Cimmerian priests, celebrated her orgies to the gods of hell: but the sacrilegious axe of Agrippa brought its forests to the ground; the sluggish waters were disturbed by ships; and the sanctity of Avernus, and its destructive effluvia vanished together. The once murky Avernus is clear and serene; and presents to the gay gondola an alluring surface, and rich verdant banks. That there are particular situations, nevertheless, in the natural disposition of the



earth, the atmosphere of which is injurious to animal life, is not to be denied: but these deleterious atmospheres are by no means irremediable. However, as there is nothing deleterious in the position, in the soil, or in the waters of this Island, so is its atmosphere the finest in the world, and its climate consequently the most pure and serene.

## LETTER XXXIII.

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### EFFECTS OF THE CLIMATE OF ST. MICHAEL'S ON ITS INHABITANTS.

TO complete my observations on the climate of these islands, I shall make a few remarks on national genius, and the physical effect of climate on the people I now record.

Genius of any kind is not peculiar to any parallel of latitude; whatever may have been the opinion of speculative writers. Not only the Antipodes but the Antiscii of our globe may be as dissimilar as the inhabitants of the Tropics and Polar Circles. But it is yet unsettled, how far the minds of a people may be affected by climate. Some attribute all in all to it. Others deny that it any wise operates on the intellect. Authorities are strong on both sides; however the truth most probably lies between. For, though it must be allowed that moral causes are of the greatest weight over the human intellect, yet to deny the co-operation of nature would be as criminal as unphilosophical.



The Portuguese of these islands differ not more in the strength and colour of their bodies, than they do in the turn and complexion of their minds. And that the different forms of their minds depend on the configuration of their organs we can no more doubt, than that this organization is varied by the climates: as we know not how spirit acts upon matter, so neither can we tell how matter affects spirit. In fewer words, the difference is not in latitude, it exists solely in a good or bad climate; in a pure, or in an impure atmosphere. The bad atmosphere of a great portion of Portugal enervates the mind as well as the body; and dissipates that fire of imagination necessary for invention. In Portugal, therefore, they are not capable of that tedious study and intense application, which produce the works of art both liberal and mechanical. It is only in healthy climates that we are to expect the arts and handicrafts in the highest perfection. From the parallel, then, which I have drawn between these islanders and the continental Portuguese, the truth of the matter seems to be this, genius depends on the animal spirits, and fine texture of the organs: and that both are influenced by soil, food, air, and heat, is most certain. I know nothing more absurd than to estimate the variation of genius by the degrees on the meridian. For climate itself does not depend on mere distance from the line:

the nature of the soil, the minerals and metals it is lined with, the contiguity to lakes and seas, the interposition of woods and mountains, make strange and considerable alterations. I have shewn what the draining of marshes did in Italy and England; and the cutting down of wood in America. So that latitude is but one of those many ratios which compose the momentum of climate. The merit of the climate of the Azores, therefore, resides in the purity of its atmosphere, and that purity is to be attributed, as I have just observed, to the nature of the soil, to the minerals and metals with which it abounds, to the living lakes with which it is adorned, and to the sea which washes its shores.—And what are the physical effects of so benign a climate? The effects are manifest in the personal superiority of the people, and in the astonishing improved condition of every animal that has at any time been introduced. Instead of degenerating in size and temper, the breed of every imported beast improves to an extraordinary degree both in spirit and bulk. Such is the physical effect of this happy climate. Its effect on the genius is not so easy to determine. Genius is of such a subtle and fugitive nature, that it is difficult, if not impossible to fix it; we can arrange it under no general law: there is no principle we can assume that will not fail us. If we assign warmth of climate, we shall soon find it neces-



cessary to change our minds, if it is considered that the greatest geniuses have been born under the most lowering skies. I would assign it to purity of climate, and on the principle that it strengthens the mind as well as the body, and serves to create that fire of imagination which is necessary for invention, and which produces the works of art, of genius, and of taste.

In this light the inhabitants of these islands ought to be celebrated for inventive capacity and intellectual endowments. For, what people of the earth are blest with such a climate as these? I before said that mere physical causes are not sufficient, and that moral causes have great weight upon the intellects of man. It was not mere physical causes that wrought such contrary effects upon the adjoining countries of Attica and Bœotia, as to render the Thebans gross, heavy, and stupid, but the Athenians, quick, lively, and apprehensive. Especially when it is considered that Bœotia was one of the best parts, and Attica the very worst of all Greece. Besides, Bœotia was originally the most noted part of Greece for genius, it was therefore made the seat of Apollo and the Muses. Cadmus was the inventor of letters, and if we are forced to doubt the country of Homer, yet we are certain that it was Bœotia gave birth to Pindar; not to mention Plutarch and others

inferior to him. Nor was it the influence of air or climate, that made that striking contrast between the Attick and Laconic genius. No, it was the meek and rigid spirits of Solon and Lycurgus, that infused into one of these republics the love of simplicity, war, and agriculture ; but into the other politeness, learning, and the arts. It is well known that the Lydians were the most warlike race in Asia, till they were subdued by Cyrus. It was not, therefore, the change of climate, that rendered them effeminate and pusillanimous. No, it was their conqueror who corrupted their manners, in order to rivet their chains ! In short, such is the force of moral agency on the mind, that it has hindered the inhabitants of these islands, notwithstanding the unquestionable purity and benignity of their climate from rising out of the oblivious pool of a rude and primitive ignorance. Governed by a political as well as a religious intolerance, they are compelled to be content with being the abject and contented subjects of mockery or mal-treatment, as it suits the humour of the different governors who are placed over them. But if the same people had, in such a climate, the liberty and the means of developing their natural capacities and their powers ; if they had a constitution free, a religion pure, and a prerogative limited ; if they had the privilege of a people allowed all the aliment proper for personal or



professional ambition, and accorded the fair play which nature, humanity, and just policy, should allow them, then would genius arrive amongst them, and cast off that slough of barbarism which the bigoted church and the tyrannic government prefer to a smooth, fair, and florid civilization. I have said before, and, as it relates to the happiness of mankind in general, it cannot be too frequently repeated, however fine the climate of a country may be, it is contrary to the nature of things and to human nature, that either genius or speculation can ever fix their choice upon a land where there is no religious tolerance—no political liberty, and, of consequence, no personal security; where virtue, talent, and property, are annually expatriated; where all the regular distinctions of rank in society are resolved into priesthood and military; and where the compelling power draws every thing of use or ornament, in the country, to the central point of a distant empire.

After this general description, and these general observations, it may be necessary to investigate into the leading manners and principles of these islands. To delineate these manners and principles without aggravation or weakness, to unravel their effects on the public welfare, and to trace them to their real though distant sources, is indeed a task of equal difficulty and import-

ance. However, in doing this, he will be much mistaken, who expects to find in me a vein of undistinguishing and licentious satire. To rail at a country at large, can serve no good purpose, and generally arises from a want of knowledge or a want of honesty. There never was a country that had not virtues and vices peculiar to itself: and in some respects, perhaps, there is no time nor country delivered down to us in story, in which a wise man would so much wish to have lived, as in the Azores, which I now describe.



## LETTER XXXIV.

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### MANNERS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE INHABITANTS OF ST. MICHAEL'S.

HITHERTO I have done little more than delineate the general and physical features of this island : I must now assume a severer tone, and delineate the ruling manners and principles of its inhabitants.

Most writers who have attempted to prove the efficacy of principle, have supposed it to be the great and universal fountain of manners : those who have espoused the opposite system, observing the theory to be at variance with fact, have rashly concluded that principle is void of all real influence. The truth seems to be between these two contrary opinions. Because, in general, principles cannot be the fountain of manners, in as much as manners, in general, precede principles : that is, in our progress from infancy, habits of acting are prior to habits of thinking. But here it is otherwise ; certain principles are here early and deeply ingrafted in the mind, which grow up with, and direct the manners of

the people. The principles, then, here to be estimated, are such only as tend to counterwork the selfish passions. These are, the principle of religion, the principle of honor, and the principle of public spirit. The first of these, has the Deity for its object; the second, the applause of men; the third, the approbation of one's own heart. Let us examine the present influence of these several principles, and then we can form a correct opinion of the manners of the Azores.

The bad effects of the religion of this people, may be reduced under three general heads: a consummate ignorance; a total negligence of virtue; and an unsociable pride and arrogance. The soul of a catholic being directed entirely by his priest, whom he mistakes for a heavenly minister, has no thirst for instruction, no feeling of the sentiment of humanity, no leisure to concern itself in the affairs of men. In this manner the catholic imagines he amply atones for his ignorance and contempt of mankind, by an affected, insincere, humility towards his confessor, and towards God. In order to shew his spiritual humility, he gives up his understanding at once, and divests himself of every faculty, which the author of all beings did actually give him to be improved, and not to be destroyed. If he had the reflection to know his own heart, he would discern this farce of hum-



bling himself so exceedingly to be the height of spiritual pride: for, he presumes all the while, that, having gained the priest, he has gained God Almighty to himself, and that the extravagance of the most vain wish shall be gratified.

This being the state of religious principle, let us now examine how it fares with the principle of honor. By this I mean the desire of fame, or the applause of men, directed to the end of public happiness. Now this great ambition, which, in other times and nations has wrought such wonderful effects, is not to be found amongst these islands. It is the pride of religion, the pride of fortune, the pride of family, that have assumed their empire over the Azores, and levelled ambition with the dirt. The honest pride of virtue is no more; or, where it happens to exist, is overwhelmed by religious vanities. The principle of honor is either lost, or totally corrupted. There is no generous thirst of praise left in the people. Their ambitions are trifling and unmanly as the religion which has undermined it. Religious zeal and worldly fortune are the sole fountains from which they desire to draw respect to themselves, or applause from others: they aspire to folly, and are proud of meanness: thus the principle of honor is perverted, and dwindled into unmanly vanity.

Can it be imagined that, amidst this general defect of religion and honor, the great comprehensive principle of public spirit, can gain a place in their breasts? That mighty principle, so often feigned, so seldom possessed; which requires the united force of upright manners, generous religion, and unfeigned honor, to support it. What strength of thought or conscious merit can there be in bigotted minds, sufficient to elevate them to this principle, whose object is, the general happiness of a people? To speak, therefore, without flattery, this principle is, perhaps, less felt among them than even those of religion and true honor. So infatuated are they in their contempt of this powerful principle, that they are ignorant of the very name of country, and know no dominion beyond the sphere of their priests. So little are they accustomed to go, or even to think, beyond the beaten track of private interest, in all things that regard their country, that he who merely does his duty, in any conspicuous station, is looked on as a prodigy of public virtue.

Domestic affections are also extinguished. There are no kind fathers; the convents are filled with daughters who should have been the ornament of their fathers' house. There are no kind husbands; the wives are treated as slaves, and seldom dine at their masters' board.



There are no affectionate children ; the parents exclude the children from their presence, and turn them over to the control of churchmen and monks. It is not affirmed or implied, in this general review, that every individual has assumed the garb and character I here describe. As in liberal countries some will be bigotted ; so, in bigotted places, the liberal character will sometimes be found. As in times of principle, some will be void of principle ; so, in times when principle is derided, in some superior minds principle will be found. But from the general combination of manners and principles, in every period of time, will always result one ruling and predominant character ; as from a confused multitude of different voices, results one general murmur, and strikes the distant ear ; or from a field covered with flocks, herds, or armies, though various in themselves, results one general and permanent colour, and strikes the distant eye.

But is it not obvious how weak must be the natural capacity of that people, whose leading members should, in general, be formed on such a model as I have described ? When instead of a general application to books, instead of investigating the great principles of legislation, the genius of their national constitution, or its relations and dependencies on that of others, the great examples and truths of history, the maxims of generous

and upright policy, and the severer truths of philosophy ; when instead of these they should seldom rise in political study higher than the knowledge of the contributions proper to pay to their prince ; instead of history, be only read in the accounts of Anthonio and a whole rabble of saints ; instead of legislation to be read only in the papal code ; instead of philosophy, to be read only in an intolerant religion ; instead of manly and upright manners, to be read only in bigotry, superstition, and enthusiasm. When this is the ruling system, what must be expected from such established ignorance, but errors in the first concoction. It is not to be understood, notwithstanding, that the manners and principles of the common people find a place in this account. For though the sum total of a nation's happiness must arise, and be estimated from the manners and principles of the whole ; yet the manners and principles of those who lead, not of those who are led ; of those who govern, not of those who are governed ; of those, in short, who make laws, or execute them, will ever determine the strength or weakness, and, therefore, the continuance or dissolution of a state. For the blind force or weight of an ungoverned multitude, can have no steady or rational effect, unless some leading mind rouse it into action, and point it to its proper end : without this, it is either a brute, and random bolt, or a lifeless ball sleeping in a cannon : it



depends on some superior intelligence, to give it both impulse and direction.

Indeed, were these islanders, *en masse*, remarkably corrupt, they might probably make a part of this estimate: but in most of those important circumstances to which this estimate refers, the islanders in general are much more irreproachable than their superiors in station; especially if we except the lower ranks of those who live in the towns. I thought it, therefore, unnecessary to mark the character of their principles or manners, unless where they appeared evidently poisoned by the example, or other influence, of the higher ranks in life. And yet, I might have described them in two words: they are an ignorant yet inoffensive people: a people who only want some leading minds to rouse them into action, and point them to their proper end: or, rather, as I have just said, like a lifeless ball sleeping in the cannon, they only want some superior intelligence, to give them both impulse and direction.

I write on the subject of manners and principles in general terms, my object being to describe a people, not to satirize individuals; to mark the general colour and complexion, not to aggravate the tints of particular persons, by throwing their respective features into one dark shade of merited horror.

## LETTER XXXV.

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### VISIT TO THE CONVENT OF ESPERANZA.

I fear it is not enough to have shewn the general defect of principle and ruling manners: to obtain a full view of the subject, it is a necessary though a disagreeable task, to trace some instances of their effects upon individual conduct.

An instance of this kind, proper for example, occurred to me the other day on a visit which I made on my return from the excursion I made round the Island. The visit which I made was to the convent of Esperanza: I was accompanied by a friend from Lisbon, and as we went for the express purpose of seeing two sisters to whom I had formerly been introduced, but who were unacquainted with my friend, I had to go through the formality of obtaining an audience by knocking at a little box which turns on a pivot at one of the doors, and which is attended by the nun who may happen to be at it in her turn of duty. I asked for my two friends by



name, and begged my respects to the lady abbess, with a request for permission to see my friends, if it did not intrude on any particular duties then passing in the convent. The nun returned with a smile of approbation, and, directing us to a particular porch afforded us an opportunity of conversing with the two lovely sisters; but, through an iron grate, for that is the utmost limit of their indulgence, and the greatest boundary of their social happiness.

The little transport of pleasure which they had expressed as soon as they beheld me, after I had been so long absent from Ponto del Gada, did not exist any length of time: a something like a foul and ugly fiend recollection conjured up in their brain, to rip open their sorrows afresh, and to blast, with its pestiferous breath, all the fair flowers of visionary happiness which sanguine youth had presented to them previously to their taking the veil, and assuming a life of unmingled despair and bitterness. Ever and anon as they cast their eye on me, on me to whom they had often related all their sorrows, I could delineate a melancholy alteration in their appearance. Their form worn thin, and their countenance overspread with a paleness which rivalled death; hungry corroding despair had banquetted on the roses that bloomed on their soft cheeks, and left behind

the traces its marking hand had imprinted; the swollen eye, surcharged with tears, that seemed prepared to burst forth, and course their ready way down the cheek; the half-stifled sob, and the quick heaves of the bosom, all gave tokens of minds woe-fraught and wounded by calamity; whilst the pent up turbulence of their grief sought to vent itself in exclamations, and, with a wish to conceal it from observation, contended for the mastery. They endeavoured, however, to regain that outward form of composure which the sight of a stranger with me, and the quick sense they knew I entertained of their condition, had moved them from, teaching their countenance to wear the semblance of a calm serenity they were far from feeling. They strove to still the agitation of their grief-charged soul; and in some sort succeeded. They looked the picture of depressive melancholy, calm and patiently resigned to meet its fate. They sat down close by the grate; the lustre of their fine eyes dimmed, and pointed downward in fearful dignity, or momentarily raised to cast a mournful look, and then again turned to their former station with a deep-fetched sigh. This excess of sensibility at this moment was owing to a circumstance which I will omit mentioning till I make you acquainted with the whole of the story of these interesting women. And as this story takes its colouring from the ruling manners and principles of the island,



its introduction here cannot be called a misplaced digression.

These two sisters are the daughters of one of the leading men of this place: of a man who was left a widower in an early stage of life, and who continued unmarried merely for their sakes, and for the sake of a son of whom he was also passionately fond. Following, however, the custom of the Portuguese, he placed his two daughters in the quality of novitiates in a convent, and put the conduct of his son's education into the hands of an indolent, ignorant, and bigotted priest. The daughters answered to his cares by the quickest improvements of the mind; and the lustre of their beauty was indescribable. Unhappily, the partiality of their doating parent, for he often had them to his home, and daily visited them, and the universal adoration paid to their persons by the numerous visitors to the Esperanza, intoxicated the minds of the young and thoughtless novitiates, and made them refuse, with unbecoming disdain, many honorable offers of marriage, made, as is the custom, to the father, during the period of their novitiate. Yet the fair sisters had susceptible hearts, and had been much affected by the silent and mysterious assiduities of two strangers who constantly attended them at the grate, and who sought all opportunities of antici-

pating their every thought, and preventing every wish. Gratitude inclined their heart to love such strangers, and they involuntarily confessed the purity of their passion to those to whom they owed so many attentions and favors. The strangers breathed a still more ardent expression of passion, and swore to engagements of perpetual constancy, fidelity, and secrecy.—For some time every scene was a scene of happiness ; and finally a day was fixed when the vigilance of the mother abbess was to be eluded, and when the favored lovers were to be at the feet of their mistresses, and exult in their success. The very place was appointed, and a priest provided to perform those rites which could alone overcome the fears and the scruples of these lovely maids.

The plan well arranged, and prosperously executed, the two sisters left the convent in disguise, and under the conduct of the faithful padre, the friend of their friends, they approached the rural altar where they were to be united by the most sacred ties to the most amiable of men. But those amiable lovers had not arrived. What a cruel incident ! Surely they will not delay a moment to fly on the wings of love to such adorable mistresses. Surely they must be impatient to conclude the ceremony that is to confirm the happiness of their life ; and that life itself is attached to ties that never can be too closely formed.



Women, when in love, are perhaps more passionately, more delicately sensible to its soft influence than men. The sweet sisters could alledge no reason for the absence of the two friends. What reasons, indeed, could be urged to hearts so replete with the tender passion? They gave way to complaints, and to all the alarms that fancy could suggest. They saw they were alive only to the pain of living torn from the objects that were far dearer to them than themselves. And these were their feelings—and this the conduct of genuine love.

But it was impossible to proceed with the ceremony. The lovers, however, could not be long absent: their susceptible hearts would consult the little decorum of the sex, and shew the impropriety of not being prompt and impatient. In minds uncorrupted by refinement, love assumes the character, the noble pride of virtue; and it feels a degree of self-complacency, it glories in its transports. The two sisters hesitated not to lament openly a delay, which was, however, to be of such short duration. But the hours of absence are years—are ages of torture to those who are truly in love. In the mean time the attendant priest endeavoured to soothe, to relieve them from this cruel state of agitation and terror. He explained the transports of their lovers when they gained his consent to this union, and from moment to

moment he fixed the time of their arrival and the commencement of their felicity.

It may be supposed that the two sisters, in proportion to the pleasure they derived from these assurances of the reverend father, anticipated the happy instant, and that their eyes were perpetually directed to the road through which their beloved was to proceed. At the least noise, 'it is them! it is them!' They had wings; they flew; with impatient eyes they looked around. 'Where are they? Holy father where are they? Where! Where! are they?' An old servant at length arrives, with a deep sorrow visible in his face. 'Senoras, it is my duty to' — 'What! are they not come, Senor? What have they changed their minds? Do they cease to love us? Do they refuse? Are they afraid of our father's power?' 'Oh! senoras, arm yourselves with courage, your lovers are not capable of such dishonorable conduct, but your father's jealousy has been excited, and his power is not now to be feared, it is already employed. He discovered the intentions of my young masters, and to frustrate them he has obtained an order from the governor to seize their persons, put them on board ship, and exile them for ever from the Azores.' At these words the old man burst into tears. The two sisters remained speechless and immoveable, and the faithful padre appeared like one stunned with thunder or stupified by blows.



In this dreadful state, without a single remedy for such affliction, or a means of mitigating such hopeless woe, the father arrived. His countenance wore the symptoms of a ferocious displeasure, and he ordered the poor victims into his carriage with a malicious frown.

I really cannot proceed with this story at the present. I shall resume it shortly, and I shall omit no circumstance of it which marks the manners and principles of the times.

## LETTER XXXVI.

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### VISIT TO THE CONVENT OF ESPERANZA CONTINUED.

IT requires but a small portion of sagacity to comprehend, that the father of the two amiable sufferers, who were the subject of my last letter, lost not a moment in restoring them to the convent of Esperanza, and this, with the fixed determination of compelling them to take the veil, notwithstanding the repugnance he knew them always manifest to this act of delusive faith whenever they saw any of their unfortunate sisters become its victim.

With an injunction on the abbess to prepare his daughters for the fatal ceremony which was to separate them from the world for ever, the father left them : left them with the measure of their woes full and running over. The sweet comforter of grief-wounded minds, angel-formed hope, too, had spread its airy pinions, and left them forlorn wretches, dead to all the world, without any prospect whispering consolation to the agitated



brain: distracted with many troubles, and seeing no conclusion to their woes, save in death's cold arms: no friendly ray of far distant happiness to break in upon their gloomy reflections; but all was dreary and comfortless. Their father inexorable: their lovers exiled. Cut off, like an offending part, from all they loved in the world, and doomed to pass their life in sorrow, and in a convent from which their soul shrunk with horror, as from the dwelling of sin and tyranny.

In bosoms so gentle, however, the father calculated upon finding a shaken fortitude; but he was mistaken: for they answered all his solicitations to take the veil with prayers, with intreaties for their return to liberty, to their home, and to a father's and a brother's society. When the father finding the vanity of persuasion, he had recourse to threats, and vowed that their lives would be endangered by their hesitating at the awful moment, when they were to pass an irrevocable sentence on themselves, and on their lovers for ever! The awful moment at length arrived. With eyes downcast, and blooming cheeks blushing like the lovely rose, they approached the altar. The audience watched; enamoured over them, beheld their fascinating features glow with ineffable sweetness, saw their enchanting bosoms heave, and heard them murmur out protestations of eternal

love, of unshaken and inviolable fidelity to the lovers from whom they were torn, and of aversion to the veil which might be forced upon them, but which they would never accept.

Vows so unexpected as these, vows of eternal love to man instead of an entire resignation to God, were received by the spectators with astonishment, and answered in an incoherent strain of rapture and abhorrence. Would that this rapture had raised in the heart of those advocates the sentiments I now feel. Would that it had urged them to take advantage of that blessed moment, and to have rescued the beauteous sufferers from the altar on which they were about to be sacrificed. But no effort was made in their behalf. And the noble spirit which animated them in the first instance, being nearly exhausted in their gentle bosoms, the father's party gained the preponderance, and the ceremony was performed amidst frantic shrieks, and violent vociferations. At the conclusion of this hellish scene, the poor victims remained sunk in woe unutterable, nor was it for some time that they could be made sensible to all that had passed.

To account for the monstrous part which the father acted in this tragical affair, it is necessary to acquaint



you, that he was hurried on by more than one passion before he arrived at such a height of complicated guilt. Besides a jealousy for the honour of his house, he was under the domination of the ruling manners and principles of his country; he was under the arbitrary government of avarice and ambition. An avarice which pointed out the profit of disposing of his daughters without a dowry, and an ambition which promised every dignity and honour, if the dowry, so saved, were to be lavished on the care and establishment of his only son. It was thus that avarice and ambition operated on the degraded mind, and blunted feelings of the father. It was thus that he was tempted to turn a deaf ear to the pleadings of nature, and the prayers of these tender daughters of misfortune, in order that his son might live in gilded luxury, and transmit his name and his wealth to an astonished and applausive posterity. Under such impressions it may well be presumed, that every means were employed for realizing those golden views, and for making this much adored son a perfect prodigy. He was sent to Lisbon, and from thence to Madrid; where he was enabled to frequent the halls of science and literature, and the circles of fashion and opulence, and to acquire all those distinctions which so essentially contribute to the éclat of life, and to the fame of one

intended to burst upon the world as a genius of the first water.

In the mean time the two sisters were wasting their days in tender and agonizing solicitude. But the lovers, of whom nothing has been said for a length of time, were not consuming their time in effeminate or ungrateful inactivity. No, they were zealously employed in expedients to repel the stroke of the father, and these expedients were such as youth and innocence might witness the performance of unblushing and uncontaminated. Having procured evidence from their English friends in this place, that the two sisters were dragged to the altar, and compelled to take the veil through a conspiracy entered into between the abbess and the father, they repaired to Lisbon, and there prevailed on the English minister to lay the whole heart-rending scene before the Prince Regent of Portugal. The impassioned eye of the prince soon poured the beams of indignation and just resentment and contempt upon the conduct of the authors of the sisters' calamities. An enquiry was instituted by his instructions, and an old law, forbidding violence of any description to be used in the ceremony of taking the veil, was called into action, revised, and promulgated, through all the Portuguese provinces.



Nevertheless, before the enquiry was made at the convent of the Esperanza by the prince's commissioners, he and his court were removed to the Brazils, and the suffering sisters lost by this unexpected event all the advantages which they otherwise would have reaped from his acknowledged justice, clemency, and benevolence. During this period it was, that I became intimate with these lovely women. And the expression of pleasure they manifested at seeing me on this present visit, is to be attributed to the part I took to effectuate their happiness and freedom. I also obtained, through the means of my friend, Mr. Read, an introduction to the father. I did this on the principle, that, although it is not in our power to rectify what is notoriously amiss in the make and constitution of our bodies ; still the affections of the mind are very much at our own disposal ; and may be brought under the guidance of reason : so that a disposition, not so happily constituted by nature, may be disciplined into regularity, for there is a cure in philosophy for most disorders in the soul. And, on the contrary, the best constituted mind, may, through neglect or by indulging a favorite passion become monstrous, by degrees.

Persons who are conversant in books of travels, and those whose curiosity or affairs have carried them into

remote countries, may observe, with me, that human passions play with greater vehemence, in general, amongst an untutored people, than amongst the inhabitants of more civilized nations : which shews the force of discipline. Where nature remains without culture, she grows wild and luxuriant ; whereas, in the regions where knowledge flourishes, she is modelled and embellished by the care of philosophers ; who may be termed the guardians of the soul. Nevertheless, as amongst the unlettered, the more enormous vices of life always shoot up in full vigour, so likewise sometimes a manly virtue rises, even to extravagance, in an uncultivated heart ; a virtue, however, rather astonishing, than useful to society. These reflections you must permit to be excusable when I inform you they sprang from my acquaintance with the father of my two charming nuns. I had not long to converse with him before I discovered a faint tendency in his heart towards liberality. This encouraged me to proceed, and, after gaining his confidence, by not appearing to lay any restraint upon his affections, or presuming to dictate which was most commendable, his love for his son, or his aversion to his daughters, I brought his avarice and his ambition to yield to his judgment and to his heart, and I was often made happy to hear him confess, with the broken spirit of a contrite father, who had blasted



the felicity of his children's days, that, by a contrary management, he might have preserved his own peace of mind, and made his daughters prove the ornament, and the comfort of his life. I was the more proud to hear such declarations, because they convinced me of what I long suspected, that our minds are furnished with a certain set of affections, which are not only the tokens of our humanity, but likewise requisite to the perfection of our nature: and whoever attentively considers mankind in general, will find the same train of desires and affections in the heart of one man, as there is in the heart of another. But I must leave you to moralize these reflections. In my next I shall hasten to finish this tedious story.

## LETTER XXXVII.

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### STORY OF THE NUNS OF ESPERANZA CONTINUED.

WHILE I was employed in gaining the confidence of the father of my two friends, and in seizing every precious occasion of rectifying his judgment, and directing his affections to those objects which were so dear to my heart, I was happy to find, that he had another spring of action, besides that of nature and conviction, and from which I derived the most powerful aid. His son had been guilty of uncommon irregularities, had overdrawn his credit several times, and was often hurried into the commission of the most exorbitant vices. But these a fond parent looked by, and for a length of time love triumphed over reason and resentment. But this time had its termination. At the period I have spoken of my connection with the father, this son had become infamous for all manner of vices. He went into the army and was turned out for a coward. After a hundred tricks at the gaming tables, he got chastised for a cheat. He was twice condemned for rapes, and



pardoned. And to avoid imprisonment for some other offence he returned to the Azores, where he framed a plot for the assassination of his father, in order to have the premature disposition of his possessions. This atrocious plot discovered, he fled back to Portugal, where he leads an unmingled life of abandoned profligacy, still endeavouring to extort money from his father by denouncing vengeance of the deepest dye should he be refused. I know the son well. He is a wretch who, with an indefatigable constancy and inimitable uniformity of life, persists, in spite of law and infirmities, in the practice of every human vice, excepting that of hypocrisy: his matchless impudence exempting him from that. Nor is he more singular in the undeviating pravity of his manners, than successful in sustaining life. For, without trade or profession, without trust of public money, he lives at the most exorbitant rate. He is, perhaps, the only person of his time, who can cheat without the mask of honesty; retain his primæval meanness when possessed of nearly all his father's revenues; and, though daily deserving the gibbet for what he did, is at length exiled for what he could not do. Oh, indignant reader! think not his life useless to mankind; Providence connives at the execrable designs, to give to after ages a conspicuous proof and example of how small estimation are exorbitant wealth and powerful friends, in

the sight of God, by his bestowing them on the most worthless of all mankind.

There are few traverses in life which a prudent man may not turn to his advantage. This conduct of the son inspired the father with a manly tenderness, natural to an honest mind, towards his daughters, and brought him to the resolution of visiting them at the convent, and of taking such steps as would effectually restore them to freedom, and unite them to the amiable objects of their desires. With all the ardour, as I have just observed, common to an untutored mind, he flew to the convent of Esperanza, but, like any ordinary stranger, he was stopt at the grate, and suffered only to converse with his daughters under the restrictions imposed on every person else. Notwithstanding this painful state of restraint, the amiable captives soon discovered the affecting and benevolent influences which he was under ; influences which naturally produced the much desired effects of returning love, and mutual forgiveness and endearment. But I need not acquaint one so well skilled in the workings of the soul as you, what passed on this occasion. Besides, the violent emotions of the soul are so very transient, that it is difficult to catch distinct ideas of them from the life. A spectator may fix a passion in the face, or he may study the workings of it in the features at his



leisure, but when he attempts to describe those just and lively sentiments he expressed in the original, his imagination fails, and he finds there is as much difference between words and colours, as there is between objects that have no manner of relation to each other. I therefore hasten to the sequel.—The father visited the daughters every day: obtained of the governor a revocation of the order of exile against the youths with whom he had lately been at enmity, and made, and procured affidavits to prove that he had caused and compelled his daughters to assume the veil by tyranny and force. By a tyranny unmeasured, open, and avowed; by a force which laboured till it produced this dreadful alternative “that the obstinate girls should meet death, if they did not seek for the preservation of life within the walls of Esperanza.”

Affidavits to this effect were carefully transmitted to the Prince Regent at the Brazils, accompanied with a petition of the father for an order of council, directed to the Abbess of Esperanza, to liberate the two nuns on whom the veil was imposed through the means of so much violence, fraud, and corruption. No answer has, however, been yet returned, and as the Queen's party in the Brazils have ever been opposed to liberations of this nature, and as that party will, no doubt, prevail on the

Prince Regent to contrast the present affidavits and petition, with the father's former proceedings when he opposed the happiness and freedom of his children, there can be no very sanguine hopes entertained of his success on the present occasion, or that his prayers for his devoted offspring will be in any manner attended to or regarded.

This melancholy conviction was in full operation on the minds of the two sisters on the day I called upon them with my friend. They also feared, not having heard from their lovers for a length of time, that the warm glow of love and gratitude was chilled in their bosoms for ever! You may well conceive that my friend and I employed our time in endeavours to remove convictions which were so adverse to their happiness; we pointed out new expedients for the reduction of all embarrassing obstacles; and we so far succeeded as to light up that transient kind of hope which enthusiasm is known to produce, but which reflection and reason have always the power to extinguish. Taking advantage of this happy moment of delusive lustre, we bade the tender sisters farewell; first promising them, wheresoever we should go, to make inquiries after their unfortunate lovers, and to hold them, ourselves, in perpetual remembrance.



Such is the history of the two sisters. And nearly similar is the history of several hundred sisters of misfortune who have been compelled to embrace a delusive path, and to take the veil that their brothers may live in luxury, or that their fathers may squander their thousands upon priests and prostitutes. There is no idea more erroneous than the generally received one, that the final seclusion of the novitiates is a voluntary act or innate wish. Deformity and disappointment; remorse and contrition; folly and madness; superstition and enthusiasm, and disgrace and calamity, may urge their victims to take the veil, but I never yet conversed with a nun possessed of beauty, modesty, sweetness, and innocence, and who had sentiment sufficient to know her own heart, whose looks did not inform me that she considered a convent merely as the silent, solitary retreat of sorrow and despair, or the grave of love, beauty and enjoyment. When will monuments of human ignorance be levelled with the dust? There are no less than four principal ones in this town; namely, St. Andrew, St. John, Esperanza, and Conception. And each has some peculiar distinctive and popular attraction. In CONCEPTION, there are seven sisters all extremely interesting, and endowed with the strongest claims on protection and love. ESPERANZA, possesses the "two sisters," whose history I have related, and whose fate and misfortunes are the topic of general

conversation throughout the Island. St. JOHN, boasts of Senhora, Theresa, Jacinta, Amelia, said to be the most accomplished woman of the age. She is the leader of the band of St. John. She has a fine figure, lively air, an easy and graceful deportment, an affable disposition, ready wit, and a mind improved by the advantages of the best education. And St. ANDREW has celebrity from being the abode of the very distinguished woman said to be royally related, and who wrote the following letter to her niece and rival, from Lisbon, previously to her retiring to St. Andrew's convent. "My dear niece,—Be not surprized at the subject of this letter. To congratulate you, in the most tender manner, upon your approaching nuptials with *that* amiable youth was the original design of this epistle; but I found, whilst my heart dictated felicitation to you, to me it intimated the most pungent sorrow.

"When I reflect on the many happy years that await you, united in those indissoluble bonds of felicity, with a youth whose transcendent virtues, and personal accomplishments, place him in the most exalted point of view, and render him at once the admiration of the women and the envy of the men, and then compare the reverse of my fortune, doomed to eternal celibacy, though my heart has long made its choice, and fixed its immutable



attention on him who is truly worthy of it:—what a cruel reflection! what a dreadful perspective! deprived even of hope, or the probability of ever stifling those sentiments which would render hope a blessing.

“How very unfortunate is my lot! I might have been happy, too happy, had I not loved this youth who has now declared a passion for you. This circumstance has debarred me his sight; it forbids me ever more to think of him. Alas! why were weak mortals born with passions, if they are not to be gratified? Why, from the weakest of the human species, is the most heroic fortitude to be expected?

“But wherefore should I lament? there is a road still left me: the cloister alone can afford relief. Thither will I fly; there shall my future days be spent in praying for your welfare; and in religious contemplation, forgetting I am a woman, my soul will soar to heaven, and antedate futurity.

“Not all the charms of grandeur: the allurements of the Braganza court, neither the solicitations of relations, or the interposition of friends, can make me swerve from my final resolution, to take the veil in a convent at St. Michael's, to leave a country and a world that can

afford me no happiness—deprived of the only object capable of communicating it.”

How beautiful and engaging are the sentiments of a fine mind, expressed in an artless, simple manner. But, I must close this kind of correspondence: for there is not a convent in the Island but what would furnish materials of the most interesting nature—superior to all those which supply the romance writers of England, and consequently worthy the attention of the ablest writers of any country. I shall conclude this subject with a few remarks on the interior regulations of these convents. Their outward dress is no more than a kind of domino which is used on festivals and on attendance at the grate. It is a black habit or loose garb; a cap, and veil generally falling back on the shoulders. The domestic dress under this, varies:—in some convents it is white, in some coloured, in most a French grey. The lady abbess is appointed by election for a limited time, commonly for three years, and is then succeeded by another of the sisterhood. The convents are supported for the most part by the friends of the nuns, and by the funds arising from lands with which they have been endowed by the munificence of individuals. The greatest harmony and friendship exists amongst the inmates of each house, and the novitiates, and the daughters of the poor; are educated in their gloomy walls in a



manner that is truly astonishing, and which is a strange contrast with the education of those who have not been in convents: an education which barely extends beyond the alphabet, which I esteem worse than the most direct and barbarous ignorance.

The two friaries in this town are of the Franciscan and Dominican orders. The first dresses in a black robe, with a large, white, broad-brimmed hat, a girdle and cross, and the hair shaved from the top of the skull. The second is dressed in a white robe, black hat, and in other respects similar to the Franciscans. The manners and principles of these people I have described in various parts of my former letters.

## LETTER XXXVIII.

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### MANNERS AND SOCIETY OF THE INHABITANTS OF ST. MICHAEL'S.

I CANNOT justify to myself the idea of closing my correspondence, as far at least as it relates to this Island, without saying something relative to the society. And yet I can assure you it completely puzzles me what to say, because the English society is limited to Mr. Read's foreign connexions, and because the Portuguese society is confined to natives with whom foreigners have little or no intercourse. Indeed the motives of association are not strong enough to compensate for the contrast in manners and principles. The Portuguese loves his repast in solitude, and eats without a fork. We like society at meals, and feel disgust at seeing a person serve himself with his fingers. I dined at Donna Paulino's the other day, and observing her use her fork with great awkwardness, I prevailed on her not to treat me with ceremony, but to lay it aside, and dine after the manner of her ancestors. She was quite pleased at the liberty I took, and told me she would be happy in cultivating an



acquaintance with the English of the place, but that the difference of their usages imposed so much restraint upon her that she came to a determination to debar herself from their society. And yet Donna Paulino is a character as well known for her uniform practice of every virtue, and her benevolence of heart, as she is universally admired for her extensive knowledge in the walks of science and learning. Having fallen into a sort of familiar friendship with this distinguished woman, I waited upon her on her Saint's day; her fille-de-chambre having informed me, that the friends of her mistress were all in the habit of paying their respects to her on that festival. On entering the drawing-room I found her seated on a sofa, in a dress far from inelegant, and attended by eight or ten ladies and gentlemen, seated on chairs which were placed in parallel lines directly from the sofa to the center of the room. A profound silence reigned, and two servants were employed in handing chocolate and cakes to the party thus assembled. I am a little particular in this description, because this is the exact form of every ceremonious visit paid by the Portuguese. Donna Paulino, knowing me to be an enemy of such formality and silence, proposed me a seat beside her, and entered into a mere chit-chat during an hour, at the expiration of which the other visitors rose to depart. Regulating myself by the same movement, I took my leave, but she bid me stay and go

with her to mass. "To mass," cried I, "Donna Paulino! God forbid, what should I do at mass?" It was all in vain, she was a fine and imperious woman, and would be obeyed. Finding all resistance vain, I bowed, presented her my arm, and encircled by a mob of maid and men servants, proceeded to the matrical church, which was full half a mile off. This was a most mortifying inconvenience to me, for at every cross and every image we came to, we had to kneel devoutly in the dust, and sing aloud as many paters and aves as were due by pontifical law to the rank and importance of the object so addressed. On entering the church, I had to follow her example in dipping my finger in some holy water which lay in a stone vase affixed to the wall, and there being no seat, or any manner of accommodation for sitting, I had to kneel by her till mass was said, having no other amusement than watching her count her rosaries and whisper her paters and aves; an employment that appeared to me to have no end. This important service over, I attended Paulino home to dinner, and I found her the best informed Islander I ever met with. I shall give you the substance of the information which I received from her on the subject of her own sex.

Perpetually secluded; going abroad very rarely, and under a veil, with which the face is completely covered,



the sun can impress no blemish on the freshness, or the colouring of the complexion of the better order of females in these islands; an acrid and saline air, such as is common in Lisbon, can never affect the fairness and the delicacy of their skin. And for whom are so many charms so carefully preserved? For the sight of one single man; for a tyrant who holds his wife in perpetual captivity. An insuperable line of separation is drawn, in these countries, between the two constituent halves of the human species: the one, the graces of which form a contrast so agreeable to the force and the masculine beauties of the other, a prisoner in the Azores, becomes the exclusive slave of one individual. No man but the proprietor or his priest can enter where the wife is: no one must behold her face without the husband's permission. No where is jealousy carried to such a horrid excess; no where is it more ferocious. An inevitable death awaits the stranger who shall attempt to introduce himself into the apartments of the wife, or address a few words to her on meeting her out of doors.

When Donna Paulino came to speak of 'inevitable death,' and of the ferocious spirit of jealousy which animated her countrymen, I rose involuntarily from my seat, and was about to withdraw with precipitation. She smiled, and informed me I ran no risk in her house;

that both she and her husband were of Spanish original; that he, in consequence, allows her an estrecho or friend, and, though he knows her to be fond of society, and even to be gallanted, he fears nothing, because he knows the point of honor and the influence of religion are deeply imprinted on her mind. I returned to my seat with an impression of perfect security, and drew forth several further observations on this interesting head.

Being permitted frequently to visit each other in little parties or female coteries, decency and reserve do not always defray the expense of their conversations. The absolute want of education and of principle, the idleness and abundance in which they pass their days, the constraint in which they are unremittingly kept by their husbands, by which they are rendered extremely unacquainted with delicacy either of sentiment or of conduct: the vivacity of their affections, the climate which communicates its fires to hearts so fruitlessly disposed to tenderness; Nature, whose powerful voice, too frequently misunderstood by those whom she calls to partake of her laws as well as of her pleasures, rouse their sensations; every thing contributes to turn their thoughts from their tyrant husbands, and to direct their vivid imaginations, their desires, their discourse towards objects they are not at liberty to attain. They amuse themselves in their



little coteries with completely changing clothes, and in mutually assuming each other's dress, and sometimes in assuming men's dress, and passing thus disguised through the streets. Intelligent in the art of amusing, and not of extinguishing the ardour which consumes them, the same disorder pursues them still into solitude. Sad resources, miserable indemnifications of a privation, which, under a temperature equally warm and dry, and to souls all on fire, appears no easy matter to support.

The husbands are well aware of these dispositions, and their jealousy is the more offended at it. Not only do they bar all access to their wives to strangers, but even their own nearest relatives are frequently excluded. They know not what it is to repose confidence in the discretion of a wife. Unfaithful to nature, they perceive not that the infidelities of which they are jealous, are the well-merited recompense of their own contemptuous behaviour, of their rigour, and of their criminal and disgusting caprices.

It would betray great ignorance of the state of women in the Azores, to imagine that they are all endowed with the same charms, that they enjoy the same elegant accommodations of life as the class I have been speaking of. The married women of the highest order are similar to exotic flowers, whose lustre is to be preserved only by

attention and management living solely in the employment of prolonging the duration of the gifts derived from nature, and of adorning them by the richness of art. The women of the lower order, instead of that whiteness, of that delicate colouring with which the complexion of the first is animated, have, like the men, a tawny skin, and like the males of the same order, they wear the garb of a rigid economy. Almost all of them, especially in the country, have hardly sufficient to keep the movements of the body from being seen: but they are little concerned with that, provided the face is covered with a full cap or coarse veil!

The most remarkable trait of beauty in the Western Isles, is large black eyes; and it is well known that nature has made this a characteristic sign of the women of the Azores. But not content with these gifts, they employ every effort of art to make their eyes appear larger and blacker.

One of those things which the love of self, and the desire of pleasing others, makes most in request with the women of the Western Isles, is to have the skin soft and smooth all over the body, without suffering the slightest appearance of roughness to remain. Next to this desire of having the skin soft, and of the most beautiful polish, is the excessive anxiety to acquire as great a degree of



plumpness as possible. The taste of the men does not incline them to thin and limber shapes, to elegant forms ; but they admire women that are rather corpulent and full of flesh. In order to attain this perfection of beauty, they make use of various drugs, as the nuts of the cocoa-tree, the buds of the hermodactyl, rasped down and intermixed with sugar.

The idea of a very fat woman is almost always associated in England and Holland with that of flabbiness of flesh, of defect in the elasticity of the countours. This is not, however, the case with the women of the Azores in general. Those of St. Michael's in particular, more favoured by nature than the females of the other islands, preserve longer their firmness of flesh : and that attractive property, added to the softness, to the fairness of their skin, to the freshness of their carnation, render them very agreeable, very desirable women, when their *en-bon-point* is not carried to excess.

Till within the last two years the women of the best order dressed with the most exact uniformity, and in a dress that never varied for the last two hundred years. It consisted of a black silk robe, and a black shawl, cast over the head and dropping down the waist. The arms raised in a perpendicular position to the head, each thumb

behind each ear, and the fingers only disengaged to manage the shawl in such a manner as to leave an aperture for the sight. And so dexterous are they in this employment, that they can see their way and observe objects without any possibility of having their persons discriminated or their features observed. This dull uniformity is now breaking, and a few scarlet and blue cloaks with gold clasps and embroidery are sometimes seen to checker this dreary monotony.

The above observations do not apply to single women. In general they are kept in convents to the very day of their marriage, or if at home, they pass the day in their own apartments, and are never to be seen but at mass; or on going to church. Their dress then is black, and a black veil instead of a shawl cast over the head and descending nearly to the feet. No woman, married or single, of any consideration in life, ever goes abroad unattended. In general every lady has two *SUIVANTES* close behind her, and often some old male relative attended by her confessor or priest. To see several parties of this description in the streets on festival days, it conveys the idea of a solemn procession, or of a great national mourning. But the relation of such things is nothing; it is seeing them performed that is either ridiculous or affecting.



## LETTER XXXIX.

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### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF ST. MARY'S.

TO pursue my original intention of giving you a complete account of all the western islands, I must at length abandon St. Michael's, and invite you to travel with me to Saint Mary's, which lies to the southward, distant about forty miles, but easily seen from the heights of Ponto del Gada on a clear and fine day.

I found Saint Mary to be a small well cultivated island, without any volcanic remains, but with many vestiges of sudden shocks from the vicissitudes of earthquakes. These exist in the adjoining little islands called Legoinas and Seca, which have been evidently torn from the main island, and in the bed of a river now dry, and which lost its waters by a chasm formed at its fountain which caused its waters to flow downwards and never more to rise.—The genus of the soil is a simple and primitive clay, decomposable into other simple substances, and differing in this respect from the earths which com-

pose the soil of all the other islands. In consequence of which it is, that St. Mary manufactures a considerable quantity of common pottery, and affords employment to several brick-makers. And I am confident, from the whiteness which some of it assumes in the fire, that there are varieties of clay in the island proper for porcelain and the best description of china ware. It also abounds in boles, a genus of earth less coherent and more friable than the clay, more readily uniting with water, and more freely subsiding from it. This admixture makes the clay favorable to the growth of wheat; and perhaps there are not finer crops of this grain produced in the same compass of territory, than what this little island affords. It may here be remarked, that in a hot country or dry climate clay is of great importance to agriculture: by its coherency it retains humidity, by which means it assists vegetation in loose soils, through which the water passes too quickly; whereas, in cold and wet climates, clay grounds, when wet, are apt to chill and rot plants by the redundancy of water they contain; and, when dry, to choke them by the hard stony texture they assume. The philosopher may draw another argument from the clay which composes this island. It is a proof to him, that all the islands of the Azores do not owe their origin to volcanic eruptions under the sea. For clay, being a simple and primitive earth, must owe its properties to



the gradual formation of the surface of the globe since the period of the Deluge, and is as distinct from lavatic matter as one substance can be from another. Wheat is the predominant produce, of which it sends to St. Michael's for re-exportation fifteen hundred tons. The reason of sending to St. Michael's is, the roadstead of Saint Mary's is too much exposed, and the anchorage besides is bad. Nearly the whole of the island is the property of a convent, in which are several inferior nuns. The nunnery has a granary attached to it: it receives its rent in wheat, there being no circulating medium, and persons have to treat with the mother abbess who stand in need of grain. The nuns are simple and rude: on visiting their grate they all flock to it, and stare with a vacancy that shews want of decency or want of soul. There are also a few friars on this isolated spot, who are as barbarous as they possibly can be. I shall give you a small specimen, which will enable you to estimate the manners and principles of this holy tribe. I was sitting peaceably at the door of the corregidor of the town of Santa Maria, when my ears were assailed at once by a most vociferous shouting, accompanied by a most vile noise of guitars, violins, drums, and other nefarious instruments, of which I could neither calculate the sounds nor tell the name. Recovering from the astonishment which this at first occasioned me, I perceived advancing towards

me a kind of rabble or mob, headed by four monks holding lighted tapers in their hands, and followed by four more, who sustained a canopy over the head of a fifth who held the Host or image of God in his hands. The shouting was performed by the monks, and the infernal music by the men, women, and children who composed the mob. Notwithstanding the rapidity with which they rushed along, and the kind of ferocious exultation which the whole concourse appeared to exhibit, I rose suddenly up, from an impulse of curiosity, and suffered myself to be conducted by the stream, till I found myself, together with the principal performers I have described, brought up into the illuminated chamber of a dying man! This ceremony it seems was what is called the administration of extreme unction, and view of the image of God before the animal functions are palsied by the extinction of the vital fire. On our entering the apartment the various bells of the town were set a ringing, and when the Host was proffered to the dying sinner a small bell was rung at his ear, to retard the instantaneous passage of life and rouse the languid, fainting wretch to a sensibility of what was passing. This produced the desired effect. The life of the dying man justly revolted at an uproar so uncongenial with its deplorable state, and it made an agonized effort, not so much to prolong its existence, as to overcome



the obstacles by which death was impeded, and as well as those terrific ceremonies which were presumed necessary for the establishment of the soul in another world. Exhausted by this effort, the victim swooned away, and as he awoke the sensibility of his nerves was finally destroyed, and he died at the moment in which the extreme unction was administered; his death appearing to me to be accelerated by the tumult and uproar with which this last act of grace was attended. But these are thoughts on which it is the sickness of thinking to dwell; and yet I must conclude this subject. Hooted thus into eternity, the priests and their attendant cavalcade retired, and left the place to a few groaning, convulsed, and weeping friends, whose sorrow, after all, appeared more the result of judgment than of sentiment, of vacuum of heart than of affliction of mind. The burial of this poor man was as extraordinary as his death was singular and turbulent. On the evening of the day of his decease, he was placed on a bier, and carried in procession to church, where the body was exposed, and surrounded by priests holding wax flambeaux, and singing passages from Scripture in the Latin language as loud as they could possibly bawl them out. This service over, a kind of a trap door was opened in the floor of the church, and the body, without a coffin, was precipitated into a species of dry well, where it was covered

with lime to hasten decay, and from which it would be taken in a few days, or as soon as another death required the small space where it lay to consume: for there is but this one grave for the whole congregation of the church; therefore, as soon as the flesh is digested by the lime, or as soon as the grave is wanted by a more recent corpse, the bones or the cadavre are taken up and cast into a charnel-house, where they are lost in a promiscuous heap and never more thought of or seen. I have looked into one of these horrid charnel-houses, said an English officer, of the name of Steele: it contained the shattered skeletons of several hundred bodies, in the various stages of natural decay! These are the moments when the decent and respectable manners of the protestant church appear in a beauteous modesty, that the gaudy magnificence of catholic splendour can never attain. Here we pause to bless the God who has placed us beyond the deceit of infatuating bigotry, and taught us meekness and humble prayer. I have witnessed the habits of a people that dishonor the finest works of nature, and that exist insensible of the favours she heaps upon them.

The custom of disposing of the dead in this summary manner, and of substituting charnel-houses for burial grounds, is not peculiar to Saint Mary's, it is common



to all the islands of the Azores, and extends as far as Madeira. And yet the most savage of Indian tribes, the most barbarous nations of the West have their barrows and their tumuli, their sepulchres and their sarcophagi. Even nations who are ignorant of the true God, and who bend the knee to the deity of unenlightened reason, to one who intoxicates his votaries with the draughts of delusion, who pollutes and unmans them by his debasing worship, who degrades the celestial resemblance in their nature, and drives them from the styes of brutality to play their savage freaks of madness through the world, even such a people talk of "the grave of their fathers," and all savages as they are, with a mild and benevolent spirit, frequently visit the consecrated spot under whose sod the head of their ancestor securely and decently reposes. But here, in the midst of a religious and civilized people; a people professing humanity and wisdom, the dead are exposed as dogs upon a dunghill, and all respect and kindness are faded with the bloom of life, or perish within the compass of an hour. The dead are not only exposed as objects of scorn to a merciless world, but they are partially consumed by an operation of art, and then cast in a situation which is held by the relatives themselves in the greatest horror. The cartilage not yielding to lime or to putrefaction so soon as the flesh, many

skeletons remain entire, till the sexton knocks them asunder with his spade, to pile the bones in less compass, and preserve room, not order, in the human slaughter-house attached to each chapel, monastery, and church. Hence are those people deprived of the powerful influence that arises from the sense of remembrance, from the sacred religion of the grave, in quelling the passions, in reclaiming the wanderings, in correcting the disorders of the heart. There are a few persons, however, in these islands whose feelings revolt at this unbecoming treatment of the dead, because they are so outrageously abused. Those persons, anxious to preserve some testimony of former existence that may strike the senses, go to the charnel-house while the frame is yet festering, or before the resemblance is utterly destroyed, and there contract with the sexton for the preservation of the skull; which is effected by separating it from the skeleton, and placing it in a matrix of mortar plashed up against the wall. This the relatives occasionally visit; but I doubt much whether such an exhibition of death in all its horrors is calculated to make the impressions of which "a green-turfed grave" is thought capable. It appears to me to excite more of horror than of sympathy, more of criticism than of kindness. The Portuguese may think otherwise; therefore they are not, without further reflection, to be condemned. It can



only be lamented that this people will deprive themselves of the protection of these attachments which all the rest of the world consider susceptible of improving those springs and powers of the human heart which are the true characteristics of civilization.

## LETTER XL.

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### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLAND OF TERCERA.

THE next tour you have to take with me is to the island of Tercera. In proceeding to Tercera, being only in a small coasting vessel, I had to return to Saint Michael's, where I soon obtained a passage in a schooner which was consigned to Mr. Read to freight with oranges, but whose destination for the moment was changed by a circumstance, which, as it relates to the commerce of the island in general, I shall relate.

The arbitrary nature of the government is such, that any person desirous of monopolizing the whole of any particular branch of commerce, has nothing more to do than to pay the governor a certain sum of money, for which he receives an exclusive licence, and consequently authority to absorb the entire of the trade, so contracted for, to himself. In consequence of this facility, a merchant of Ponto del Gada obtained a contract for the supply of the whole island with tobacco and snuff: in



the course of a short time he made a considerable fortune, but it so happened, from the prevalence of contrary winds, that his stock was exhausted, and that his supplies failed to meet the wants of the place. This neglect or misfortune, on his part, soon raised a party against him, and a public commotion was feared, if snuff and tobacco could not be immediately supplied. For the passion of the natives for these articles is so great, that they would cheerfully submit to any privation sooner than go without tobacco or snuff. And I was informed, that no event of tyranny or oppression ever rose their mind to a state of insurrection, and yet, such is the effect of habit and effeminacy, that the temporary want of this miserable drug could elevate them to one of the most powerful and gigantic efforts of the public mind.

To appease this unnatural appetite, and suppress the spirit of insurrection, Mr. Read diverted the destination of his schooner, and sent her to Tercera with the contractor, who expected to be supplied from the stores there, until his orders from Lisbon came to hands. In this schooner I obtained a passage: it occupied twenty-four hours—the distance being forty leagues. We anchored in the road of Angra, from whence the city of the same name makes a most beautiful appearance; the government house, convents, and other public buildings

being seen to the greatest advantage, and secured from attack by sea, by several forts which cover the landing and ornament the shore for a sweep of two miles distance at least.

The formalities on landing are common to all the islands, but Tercera being the seat of government, they are observed with more punctilio than elsewhere. I first went to the British Consul, to whom I had a letter of introduction, and was escorted from thence by two soldiers to the government house, where I was interrogated by an adjutant, and after some small delay introduced to the Governor himself. I found him to be the most polite and affable Portuguese I had ever met with, and received from him much civility and information during my half-hour's stay. I next returned to the Consûl's where I met all the resident Scotch and Irish of the place, and who associated there for the hospitable purpose of inviting me, each to his respective house. There being no tavern in the city, I took up my abode with one, on whom a letter of introduction gave me a kind of claim.

The island is called Tercera in consequence of its being the third which was discovered in succession, and it is the seat of government, because it nearly forms the center of the Nine, and has also a safer roadstead than St.



Michael's, or any other of the islands, except Fayal, which lies too far to the west for the purpose of distributive justice and equal legislation. In form it is wider, and not so long as St. Michael's; it is about sixty miles in circumference, and the exterior appearance differs from that of St. Michael's in a very extraordinary degree. The summits of its mountains compose, for the most part, very beautiful and fertile plains, and entirely destitute of those cones, craters, and bifurcated points which distinguish the mountains of St. Michael's, and exhibit such strong evidence of volcanic eruptions. Not but there have been volcanos in Tercera, but the time has been so remote that their vortexes have filled up, either by the frequent and sudden absorption, or by the gradual operation of time. The lava is in a general state of decomposition, which added to the level state of the craters, is sufficient proof, that the volcanos of Tercera were in full action, several hundred years before the mountains of St. Michael's were elevated by fire. There are neither boiling nor mineral springs in Tercera, but it is abundantly supplied with fine water from fountains and streams, which flow from the mountains down to the sea on every side.

The productions are principally confined to wheat, Indian corn, French and broad beans. The redundancy

of which is exported to Lisbon and Madeira, and for which a return is made in colonial produce, money, and British goods. The vessels employed in this traffic amount to sixty or seventy, and average about eighty tons each. Oranges and lemons are cultivated more for domestic, than for commercial purposes, and the wine is neither abundant nor good. The soil being more congenial to agriculture and pasturage, than to the cultivation of fruit, grain and cattle are to be had in abundance, and at a very reduced price, and the population amounting to about 50,000 souls, are enabled to live with a facility hardly credible to persons who are compelled to labor twelve hours to realize the price of a quartern loaf of bread. Fish is also in great plenty and of the finest quality, but from this, and indeed from every other natural blessing, the natives derive no manner of advantage. Instead of their own pure unadulterated wine, they drink a deleterious spirit introduced from the Brazils; in the place of eating the best of fish furnished by Providence on their own coast, they consume nothing but buccalo, dog and cod fish, salt and often putrid, brought from the banks of Newfoundland and Mediterranean sea. For their own beef, the finest in the world, and for their own pork, which cannot be excelled, they substitute the dry jirk and miserable bacon of Portugal. And for their own linen, which is admirable of the kind,



they accept a meagre cotton which imbibes the dew, and consequently is the worst thing that can, in such a climate be worn. I know not whether to attribute this insensibility to the bounty of nature, to perversion of judgment, or to depravity of heart. Yet it cannot be the latter, for the people of Tercera are held in great estimation; regarded as mild and benevolent; as superior in point of civilization to the inhabitants of the sister islands around. I have noticed this preference and its cause. Tercera is the seat of government. A better description of clergy, of military, of civil officers, and of settlers, has, of course, come to it. The police and the laws are also better attended to, and the people have both example and terror to improve the condition of their minds. The Portuguese society, that is what is commonly called the best native society, is much better at Angra than at del Gada. At Angra the manners of Lisbon very much prevail, and an etiquette is observed which would look ridiculous in a mere trading town. Assemblies are frequent; card parties every evening, and dinners on some few public days. The dinner parties are of very short duration. What wine is drank, is drank before the cloth is removed. Coffee is then served, after which the company disperse; the English, to enjoy their bottle at their own homes; the Portuguese, to enjoy a *ciesta* or afternoon nap.

At Tercera, as at Saint Michael's, there is no amusement more prevalent than that of visiting the convents. Their music is in truth, a grand attraction. To hear the perfection in which the nuns jointly and individually perform, one should be taught to believe that the instruction of harmony alone was the proper end and design of all convents. No other object is held up by them to admiration, no higher excellency seems possible to be attained. And the only danger likely to arise from its perfection is, that it is a science so alluring to the imagination, that it has a tendency to overpower the faculties of women, and to destroy that calm and equal temper of mind which seem best adapted to a life of privation and seclusion. They probably are convinced that this mode of address is the surest passport to the hearts of the people, and the appeal is made so frequently, and with so much enthusiasm, that the people and the performers are deceived, and imagine that to be a religious exercise, which is nothing more than an indemnification, to souls all on fire, of a privation, which, in such a climate, it is not easy to support. One of the convents is remarkable for the beauty of its women. It is a convent for the higher order, one, in which its amiable inhabitants cannot be seen without exciting the strongest sensations of indignation and abhorrence, against the system which thus shuts them from a world, to which they



would be so bright an ornament. Besides, what a progress have the lovely beings to travel through, before they can obtain the peace and tranquillity which they originally possessed! How like the wounds of the body must be those of their minds! How burning the fever! How slow, how hesitating, how relapsing the process of convalescence! Through what a variety of sufferings, through what new scenes and changes must the devoted victims pass, ere they can re-attain, should they ever re-attain, that health of the soul, of which they have been despoiled by the cold and deliberate machinations both of their parents and of persons professing to be friends to the holy mother church. Before I leave this subject of the convents, I must inform you that I have had a conversation with the Governor on the subject of the Franciscan who was sent to him for judgment from Ribeira Grande, where he seduced a beautiful nun in one of the convents, in which he officiated as chaplain and confessor. From the interest I took in that unfortunate nun's restoration to happiness, which was very great, as you may recollect from the cast of my letter, in which I describe her calamity, I could not resist addressing myself to the Governor with more than ordinary zeal. I told him, in every point of view in which I could look at the subject, I saw him called upon to give a verdict, of bold, just, indignant, and exemplary punishment. The injury of

the unfortunate nun demanded it of his justice. The delinquency of the friar provoked it by its enormity. The profession of the church on which he relies for impunity, calls upon you (said I, addressing myself to the Governor) loudly calls upon you to tell him, that crime does not ascend to the clerical rank of the perpetrator, but the perpetrator sinks from his rank, and descends to the level of his delinquency. The sacrilegious intruder has profaned the religion of that sacred altar so elevated in your worship, so precious to your devotions, and it is your duty to avenge the crime. You must either pull down the altar and abolish the worship, or you must preserve its sanctity undebased. There is no alternative between the universal exclusion of all mankind from the threshold of your convents, and the most rigorous punishment of the priest who is admitted and betrays. This friar has been so intrusted, he has so betrayed, and you ought to make him a most signal example.

The Governor assured me that he sent him to Lisbon with a *procès-verbal* of the strongest nature, and that, were not ecclesiastical cases to go, in all instances, to the supreme court on the Continent, he would have punished him according to the extent of his guilt. This friar, as I observed on a former occasion, has been sent from



Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro, but no person entertains any hopes that there is justice or resolution sufficient in that court to hang a monk.

I have omitted to mention that there is an immense large building, originally intended both for palace and barracks, on a very large and beautiful plain, on the summit of a mountain no great distance from Angra. This building is now made little or no use of. If ever the island was made a depôt for troops, it would be of great consequence for their accommodation, and the more so as the plain on which the building stands is eminently calculated for the review and discipline of an army. The cheapness of provisions also renders the island eligible for military purposes.

The town next in rank to Angra, is Praya. It is delightfully situated on the east side, and there is good anchorage in the roadstead.

## LETTER XLI.

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### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLANDS OF GRACIOSA AND ST. GEORGE.

MOST persons who have visited these islands, and who have condescended to make any passing remarks upon them, speak of Graciosa as the most beautiful of them all, and apply to it other epithets and denominations, which denote a state of pacification and repose. The word GRACIOSA itself implies a kind of paradise; and it is worthy of remark, that the Portuguese gave it this proud title while it was yet in a state of nature, and not ornamented as it now is, by the hand of man.

I embarked for this island at Praya, and made the run in six hours: the usual time. The principal town is Santa Cruz, but the roadstead is open; and without a traveller have abundance of time, he had better always sleep on board, for the instances are numerous of vessels being compelled to run out to sea, and not recovering the island again for six or eight weeks. Indeed, the



island requires no great time to explore, it is barely twenty miles in circumference; and as its productions are similar to those of Tercera, and absorbed in the commerce of that place, there is little left to gratify curiosity, or to inform the mind. There is one particular circumstance, however, that must strike the attention of the most ordinary observer. The cattle of every description diminish in proportion, as it would appear, with the diminution of the islands. In Saint Michael's they are more than ordinarily large; in Tercera they are of a middling size, in Graciosa they are small, and in Flores and Corvo the volume of an ox does not exceed that of an Alderney cow. There is also a difference in the produce; the fruit, in particular, degenerates in the small islands, and the exotic plants lose considerably both in perfume and bloom. Notwithstanding this latter fact, Graciosa possesses, beyond contradiction, in a high degree, the properties which have been ascribed to it of peculiar beauty, and what moreover may be called a character of rich luxuriancy. It is extremely verdant and fertile; and there is, during its lucid periods, a mild and mellow effulgence shed over it which I never perceived on the face of any country in which I had ever been.

The character of the inhabitants accords with the

features of the country. They are mild and peaceable, ignorant and happy. When I say ignorant, let it not be thought that I am speaking of a horde of savages. Every operation performed by the people of Graciosa bears the stamp of the most perfect intelligence. Their houses are well built; their boats of a construction from their own model; their linen wove by themselves; the fruit trees ranged judiciously in their fields, which have all the embellished aspect of your orchards and plantations, without their tedious uniformity; all their farms cultivated to the highest degree, and the instruments of their arts for the most part made by themselves; such are the rights which they possessed, at least to my esteem, notwithstanding the little time which I had to be acquainted with them.

On leaving Graciosa, I steered my next course to Saint George, a small island as celebrated for its calamities and rudeness, as what Graciosa is for the fertility of its soil and the felicity of its inhabitants. In size there is no essential difference; in form, the contrast is very striking, Graciosa being a short oval, and Saint George being a narrow and long ridge, with both seas visible from its high grounds. The three islands of Tercera, Graciosa, and Saint George, constitute a triangle in the ocean, and are at equal distances from each



other. The two last are tributaries to the first, as Saint Mary's is to Saint Michael's: that is, having no good harbours or safe roadsteads, they send their produce to Tercera, where it is negotiated for them, and from whence they draw their returns.

In making the island from the north side, it is proper to stand round it, in order to make the best anchorage, which is at Ponto de las Velas, on the beach of which stands a neat little town with churches, convents, and all the other glittering emblems of christianity, for which the most ordinary Portuguese villages are conspicuous. At the time of my arrival the inhabitants were in deep mourning, and a character of dark gloom and mystery pervaded the whole scene. The remains of consternation and horror had preserved its reign in most countenances, and made that kind of impression on me, that I hesitated to demand the cause; nor was it necessary to demand it, for on walking to an eminence above the town, I could perceive the cause to exist in the general wreck and smoking ruins of the country. You will comprehend from this, that the island had lately undergone the dreadful operation of an earthquake, and the more dreadful evil of a volcanic eruption. It was in the year 1808, when a caldeira, seated in the middle of the island, was perceived to be in a very agitated state,

and a low subterraneous noise was heard at the same time, but which increased in detonation, at intervals, to such a degree, as to cause the windows of the houses to shake. From producing that effect it began to vomit vast quantities of melted matter instead of water which it was accustomed to cast up, and the earth roared and laboured most dreadfully. For several days the island continued in a state of fermentation, and night and day the most awful appearances and rumbling noises were seen and heard. At length the moment of the final and fatal catastrophe arose. It commenced its career with a hideous bellowing, which was succeeded by loud claps of apparent thunder, and in an instant after the whole island appeared one liquid stream of fire. The thick cloud of smoke was so great, that the darkness was equal to that of midnight, or at least so great as to render the ignited matter more bright, terrific, and clear. The largest stream took its course towards the beautiful little town of Ursula, the inhabitants of which, under an impression that the entire island was devoted to total annihilation, flocked to the convents and churches, and abandoned themselves to prayer or to despair. They saw no reasonable grounds for hope, for at every clap of thunder, or rather at every explosion which resembled the report of the largest artillery, the earth opened in different places and cast up red hot stones, scorïæ, and



ashes, and then the lava flowing over, rushed down the sides of the mountain, threatening every part of the island at one and the same time. At one tremendous instant the fate of Ursula was thought to be irrevocably decided. The black stormy clouds covering a bright column of fire were advancing rapidly upon the town, and had reached so near that the windows were broken, the walls cracked, the houses shook, and such of the inhabitants as had resolution to leave their churches, made for the shore, to be prepared to plunge into the sea; preferring to perish by water than by fire. This fountain of ignited matter, after destroying a considerable portion of the town, was directed in its course by a valley, at the extremity of which stood the convent of the Sacred Sisters, known vulgarly by the name of the Ursulines. This circumstance became the origin of a most interesting and extraordinary spectacle. The mother abbess assembled all her nuns, placed a crucifix in each of their hands, cast the gates of the convent open, and advanced to meet the column of fire, in solemn procession, weeping and praying aloud, and beseeching the Virgin, and their patron Saint, to avert the vengeance which threatened their house, and to save them from the destruction which was then desolating every thing within their view. In an instant the liquid transparent fire assumed a change of course, and no longer

menaced the convent with desolation and ruin. The nuns prostrated themselves on the ground. The lava bent its way to the ocean without doing much further damage to the town, and on the third day, the commotion of the earth and the fire from the eruptions entirely ceased. The Ursulines returned to their convent singing hymns of praise; and the people resorted to them to express their gratitude, and to assure them that they would ever esteem them as saints when living, and canonize their bones when dead.

Having been led by curiosity to the spot where this miracle was performed, I soon perceived that it could, with great propriety, be attributed to other causes than those of the Ursulines' intervention and prayer. I could perceive that the valley was intersected with a ravine, no doubt the effect of a former earthquake, which communicated with the ocean; and that the ravine, having a more rapid descent than the valley, the fire naturally took that channel, and soon spent itself in the abyss of the sea. You may be persuaded that I did not divulge these remarks. To a people who have so few subjects of felicity, it would be cruel to destroy this their late fountain of confidence and pleasure. They look up to the Ursulines as "Saving Angels." God forbid that I should attempt to shake their faith!



The injury done to the island cannot be made good for one hundred years: nor is it probable that it ever will assume the smooth and florid surface which it once possessed. Hundreds of the best cultivated acres have been covered with lava, scoriæ, ashes, and stone, and several lives, and numerous flocks and herds of cattle were lost. And yet this tremendous visitation has not awakened any considerable spirit of emigration. Few have absented themselves since the catastrophe, and nearly all are employed in repairing the damages the island has sustained. There is, however, that kind of gloom over society which induced me to hasten my departure; and after going to the grate of the Ursulines to receive their benediction, and a few tokens of their amiable and benevolent dispositions, I departed for Fayal, which, though not next to Saint George, is the only safe place to make, the anchorage of Pico being bad.

## LETTER XLII.

---

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLAND OF FAYAL.

ON my passage from Saint George to Fayal, I coasted along the northern side of Pico, which is distant but a short ferry over from Santa Cruz, and I can assure you that nothing can equal the grandeur of the perspective of the mountain, of its decorations, and of the high dome which majestically crowns it. It is impossible to pass by this magnificent, though small island, without stopping to enjoy the noble *coup d'œil* which it presents, and feeling the pleasing sensations awakened by its improved state of agriculture, and the wealth and employment which its vineyards afford to the numerous happy people who are seen perpetually occupied upon its banks. All round the base of the mountain the hand of industry has been busily employed in forming gardens, vineyards, and corn-grounds, and in forming a strong contrast with the rude state of the uncultivated summit. The form of the island is also an object of interest. It is that of a sugar-



loaf, the sea washing its base, and its head enveloped in the clouds. Such, at least, is its appearance from the side of Fayal. On that of Saint George the land is seen to trend from the foot of the mountain to the E. S. E., which justifies a conjecture that the principal stream of lava which issued from the crater of Pico, took this direction, and this prolonged the base of the volcanic cone on the south-east side. For, whatever doubts there may be as to the origin of the other islands, there exists no doubt whatever that this celebrated peak is a volcanic production, generated by the eruption of fire from the bottom of the sea. And yet the sea is not to be fathomed within half a mile of its base, and the elevation is seven thousand feet high! The grounds on which this opinion is formed are by no means hypothetical. The entire base of the Peak is formed of lavatic stone to the lowest water-mark; its soil is a decomposed lava, lying on a stratum of lava, and the Peak itself, when struck, either by accident or intent, returns a palsied or reverberating sound. It is, in short, a hollow cone, created by the expansive properties of fire; for expansion and fluidity result from the same operation of caloric; that of entering into the pores of bodies, separating their particles, and, by the addition of their own bulk, necessarily increasing the bulk of that on which it operates.

The Peak produces a wood in considerable quantity, whose quality is as good as that of mahogany: it is in great request at Lisbon, and is manufactured into writing-desks, work-tables, and other pieces of fancy furniture. But its great wealth consists in wine, of which it produces annually about five thousand pipes. This wine has been latterly cultivated in a very improved manner; its principal market is the West Indies; the British commissaries of those colonies keep an agent at Fayal, who contracts for the principal portion of each vintage, and sends it off by vessels employed for that particular trade. The wine is of the colour and flavor of inferior Madeira, is cheaper by 50 per cent., and is held in great repute by the navy and army in the West Indies; who find it, from experience, to be much superior to any other wine in a hot climate. The inhabitants of the Peak prefer to live in detached houses, villas, and hamlets, to towns and villages. There is one town, called Logens, chiefly for the accommodation of the monks, and a village opposite Santa Cruz. But there is no harbour or any anchorage for other than boats that can run into little bays and creeks. In consequence of this deficiency the Peak serves as a tributary to Fayal in the manner that Saint Mary does to Saint Michael, and as Tercera receives the produce of Graciosa and Saint George.



On entering Fayal it requires but a small portion of penetration to perceive that its port is by far the safest in all the Azores. There were in it thirty sail, on the day of my arrival, and I was informed there was sufficient room, and good anchorage, for sixty more. There are several English, Scotch, and Irish settlers in Fayal, consuls from various nations, and more strangers to be met with than could reasonably be expected from the size of the place. The original trade consisted in the supply of ships homeward bound from the Indies, from the South Seas, and from the Brazils; but since the increase and improvement of the Peak wine, of the advanced state of agriculture, and the more general diffusion of a liberal and tolerant spirit in politics, the commerce of Fayal has extended itself considerably. In good years from eight to ten thousand pipes of wine are exported, and corn and provisions sufficient to freight seventy vessels of from eighty to one hundred tons each. It has this advantage, that it is directly in the track of homeward bound European ships, with which it can carry on a considerable direct and indirect traffic; whereas Saint Michael's is too far to the east, and is seldom visited but by vessels out in their reckoning, and in want of provision or repairs. It has also another advantage, which may ultimately make it the centre of all the commerce of all the islands. A good harbour may be made,

to a certainty, for about eighty or ninety ships, and at a very small expense. But as the distance is so great between St. Michael's and Fayal, every exertion should be employed to make a good harbour at both islands, and then divide the commerce; concentrating the trade of St. Mary, Tercera, St. George, and Graciosa, at Saint Michael's, and forming that of the Peak, of Corvo, and of Flores, at Fayal. This distributive plan would advance the general interests, and by having harbours at the extremities of the chain of islands, numerous lives and several vessels would be preserved every year. Whereas, at present, in certain winds, and certain weather, vessels are compelled to slip their cables, and run out to sea for safety; many of them about half-loaded; and some of them in no condition whatever for beating about on a lee shore. It is calculated that one-sixth of the vessels thus driven off never return to the islands, and that one-twelfth are never heard of more. But what is this to the Portuguese government; to a government which interests itself only in the good of the souls of its subjects, but is entirely indifferent and regardless about their situation and prosperity in the present life? It is a circumstance truly singular that the only harbour in all the nine islands, is that in the vicinity of Villa Franca, an harbour formed out of the island, excavated by volcanic eruptions, and rent asunder at one side by the shock of an earthquake,



as if expressly to admit the sea, and save those vessels and their crews which so often arrive upon that coast in the winter leaky and distressed. One would have thought that this effort of nature would have roused the sluggish faculties of the Portuguese: it, however, has not, and I doubt much whether the volcanic harbour near Villa Franca is known to the Portuguese, save those who live within its immediate sphere or sight.

At the time that Portugal was a naval power, and that her Brazil ships and their convoys frequented the port of Fayal, and touched at the other islands, her fleet was annually supplied with upwards of a thousand fine boys, which was not only a great augmentation of number, but a considerable acquisition of strength, for those boys being bred from their infancy, I may almost say, on the sea, became instantly serviceable, and in a short time expert sailors. This strong inclination in the youth for the sea-service accounts, in some measure, for the scanty population, and for the convents being filled with girls. Were the convents vacated, there would be thirty women for one man seen in the streets. Were these islands under the influence of Great Britain she would know how to take advantage of this disposition in the men for a sea-faring life. She would also know how to equalize the population as it regards the sexes, and bring the

islands to a level with her own genius and interests without disturbing the balance on either side.

In population and extent Fayal is not one third as considerable as Saint Michael's, nor is its production by any means so diversified. Wine is the staple commodity of Fayal: fruit of other description than the grape does not exceed the home consumption, and the supply of ships *en passant*. But as it is the depôt of the Peak, and of Corvo, and Flores, it has always a supply of wheat, corn, and provisions for exportation, and of a quality that cannot be excelled.

Fayal is just as much infested with priests as the other islands I have described; it has also convents which are visited by the natives, and by strangers, and which, in fact, furnish the principal amusement of the place. I have abstained, latterly, from going into any detail of the ruling manners and principles, as I found they differ in a trifling degree from those of Saint Michael's, on which I long dwelt. There is a great uniformity in the character of the Portuguese. The Portuguese of all parts are the same. And the Portuguese of the fifteenth century, and him of the present day, are in principle and manners the same. There is one trait, however, in the disposition of these islanders, which is marked with



peculiar force at Fayal, and which it would be peculiarly illiberal in me to pass over, I mean their civil and hospitable conduct to strangers. The hospitality of other countries is a matter of policy or convenience, in civilized Europe of the first, in savage America of the latter, but the hospitality of the people of the Western Isles is not the running account of posted or ledgered courtesies, or of abject necessity, it springs, like all their qualities, their faults, their virtues, directly from the heart. The heart of an Azorean is by nature mild, and he sympathizes; it is tender, and he loves; it is generous, and he gives; it is social, and he is hospitable. It is not till his judgment is perverted, and his heart depraved by the superstition and enthusiasm inspired by his profane religion and sacerdotal directors that he acquires that character of avarice and brutality which I have been compelled to attribute to him in former passages of these Letters. Such is the imperious dominion with which truth and reason wave their sceptre over my intellect, that no solicitation, however artful, no talent however commanding, can seduce it from its allegiance. In proportion to the humility of my submission to its rule, I consider that I rise into some faint emulation of that ineffable and presiding divinity, whose characteristic attribute is to be coerced and bound by the inexorable laws of its own nature, so as to be all-wise and all-just

from necessity, rather than election. This has been the conviction and the sentiment which has governed me in this correspondence. I should not have dealt fairly with these honest islanders if I had called upon you to appreciate their character by any other principle, than by the guilt, delinquency, and degradation of their religion and government. The Azores were originally called *les Isles Fortunées*, or the Fortunate Islands, and truly fortunate will they be if Great Britain were to confer on them constitutional freedom, national independence, and a system of government founded on the enlarged and just notion of impartial justice, and the general and immutable laws of right and wrong; yielding indiscriminate and impartial happiness to all its members; and shedding alike its genial influence over all its subjects. Bestow this system of government on the Azores, and the story of the Fortunate Isles will be again revived.



## LETTER XLIV.

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### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE FLORES.

THE gradual steps by which I have hitherto led you to a knowledge of the Azores have brought my history nearly to a close; for, the impossibility of obtaining a ready passage to Flores and Corvo, compelled me to abandon the idea of visiting them, and exposes me now to the necessity of giving you a rapid description of those from the testimony of others.

The first derives its name from the multitude of flowers with which it was found to abound on its first discovery, and the second from the circumstance of its having been the favorite habitation of numerous flocks of cows at the time the Portuguese first visited the island. This practice of the Portuguese, of naming objects from the manner in which they strike the senses, is one that I admire very much, and to which also their language is peculiarly adapted. A language very sonorous, very harmonious, very emphatic, enables them to

render all their ideas, and to express all their wants with a noble simplicity, which neither excluding the modification of tones, nor the pantomime of the passions, preserves them from that superb battology which we call the richness of language, and which makes us lose, in the labyrinth of words, the justness of precision, and the promptitude of judgment. The Portuguese, on the contrary, names immediately the object which he perceives; and the tone in which he pronounces the name of this object has already expressed the manner in which he is affected by it. A few words make a rapid conversation. The operations of the soul, the movements of the heart, are isochronous with the first movements of the lips. He who speaks, and he who hears, are always in unison. Whereas we name objects either to flatter individuals, or the whimsicality of our own taste, consequently the object is by no means designated by the name; but when I hear of islands named Graciosa, Flores, Corvo, Pico, &c. I comprehend something of their nature and qualities; at least much better than if they had been called, Princess Charlotte, Lord Nelson, Prince Edward, Saint Vincent, &c.; after the manner of British navigators: a manner I could wish had never been introduced to the world.

Flores is as distant from Fayal in a north-west, as



St. Michael's is from Fayal in a south-east direction ; that is, upwards of 40 leagues ; the islands extending between 25 and 31 degrees West Longitude, which embraces a space of upwards of 240 miles. Flores, nearly as large as Fayal, is of a semicircular form, and so indented with creeks and bays that it affords protection to ships from every quarter. Santa Cruz, and Lagens, on the east coast, are the two principal towns and ports. The government is confided to a Portuguese commander appointed by the governor in chief at Tercera, and in all other respects the ruling manners and principles are similar to those of the rest of the Western Isles. The produce consists of wheat, pulse, and poultry. The last esteemed the finest in the world. Cattle are numerous though small ; in size similar to the cattle of Alderney and Sark. The permanent commerce is with Fayal, Madeira, and Lisbon : the casual trade is with those numerous vessels that fall into those seas by losing their longitude, and put into Flores to repair and refresh their crews. Instances of this kind are so numerous, particularly with American vessels, that this traffic is both considerable and lucrative, and keeps the inhabitants in a state of activity which forms a happy relief to the "still life" to which they would otherwise be condemned ; for their insulation is such, and their situation is out of the track of all navigators, that, were it not for the vicissi-

tudes to which ships are subject from stress of weather, errors in reckoning, and other incidental circumstances, these islands would seldom be visited, and the inhabitants would know as little of the world as islanders of the South Seas.

CORVO lies a few miles to the north of Flores: has good anchorage on the north and south shores, but is otherwise so inconsiderable that it is not worth any further notice. What superfluities it possesses it sends for transit to Flores, from whence it receives the small quantity of colonial produce and British goods which its wants demand. On the whole, these two islands are of the least consequence of all the nine; their geographical situation being bad, and the excess of their produce, and their consumption of merchandize not being an object worthy of regard. There is, however, one point of view in which they can be viewed to great advantage by Great Britain. They could be made to serve that most expensive and destructive of all establishments ever formed by the English government, I mean the establishment for felons at Botany-bay. I before said, in the early part of this correspondence, that the system of that institution is ruinous, and I now say that ministers are laying the foundation of an independent and piratical state, which may, ultimately, ruin our trade with China, and in many



other respects prove injurious to the British empire. Whereas, since convicts must be transported somewhere, according to the English penal code, their transport could be effected to these islands without any relative cost, and they could, by the smallest exertions of industry, maintain themselves, without being, as they now are, a source of perpetual care and expence to government.

If we look at this subject on a larger view it will be found to hold out still greater advantages. That view is, to make all the islands of the Azores subservient to this great plan of punishing felony and reforming criminals. The particular advantage attending this plan would be, that it would separate the offenders from each other, and place them so immediately under the discipline of the church and magistracy that they would of necessity stand corrected by apprehension, and soon become amended by example. A gang of convicts might be stationed at Ponto del Gada to make the harbour of which I have spoken. A number of female offenders could be stationed at the grand and azure Lakes, to manufacture hemp into linen, and the coarse part could be sent to St. Mary's, where a band of convicts could be maintained for the purpose of making cables and every other description of cordage. Tercera, St. George, Graciosa, and Pico, present similar accommodations and advantages, with

this difference, that as they have few ports the means of escape would be more impracticable and difficult. In forming the harbour at Fayal a very considerable gang could be employed, and as all the islands stand in need of roads, harbours, and other improvements, the occupation of the convict would never subside. The principal objection will be the facility of escape: this could be obviated by a rigid discipline. Besides from some of the islands escape would be impracticable. Graciosa has but two ports. St. George the same. The Peak has but one. Fayal no more than two, and no island exceeding three or four. Those ports have all small towns and military and civil establishments; therefore by a rigid discipline, a peculiar dress, and a heavy penalty to any person aiding escape, there would be no more local objection to these islands than there can be made to Botany Bay; whence, by the bye, convicts are known to effect their escape every day. The policy and economy of this plan is great, I hope it will be confessed by every impartial person, and yet, the moral advantages to be derived from its adoption are greater far—so great, as to range beyond all ordinary conception. But these it is the province of the divine to point out. I shall therefore close this correspondence with the remark that I disclose this plan, and the other suggestions of these pages, with the view of endeavouring to do a service to my fellow-



subjects. I have done it to the best of my understanding, and, without looking to the approbation of other men, my conscience is satisfied. What remains to be done concerns the British government. The ministers have now to determine for themselves whether they will take the Azores under their protection, by treaty or purchase, or whether they will abandon them to the slavish and miserable condition to which they are reduced through the vice and weakness of their present civil and religious establishments. To a generous mind there cannot be a doubt. The ministers owe it to God to improve the condition of mankind. They owe it to the Azores, thrown now immediately within the British sphere, to procure for them those rights of which they have been so long bereaved. They owe it to England not to suffer the treasures lent to Portugal to be lost.

Such are the sentiments and ideas which naturally intruded themselves on my mind while in the act of exploring these interesting islands. In their description, I did not conceive that they stood in need of the artificial attractions of eloquence, to reflect on them borrowed lustre, or confer on them a surreptitious importance. Subjects of such magnitude are in their nature sufficiently interesting, and will, doubtless, find a warm reception in the mind

E. S. Allen Esq  
1/28/10

of every person ignorant of the Azores. They require only the unvarnished auxiliary of truth, and the simplicity of self-evident demonstration, to command and engage serious and candid attention.

Believe me to be,

Dear Sir,

Your's truly,

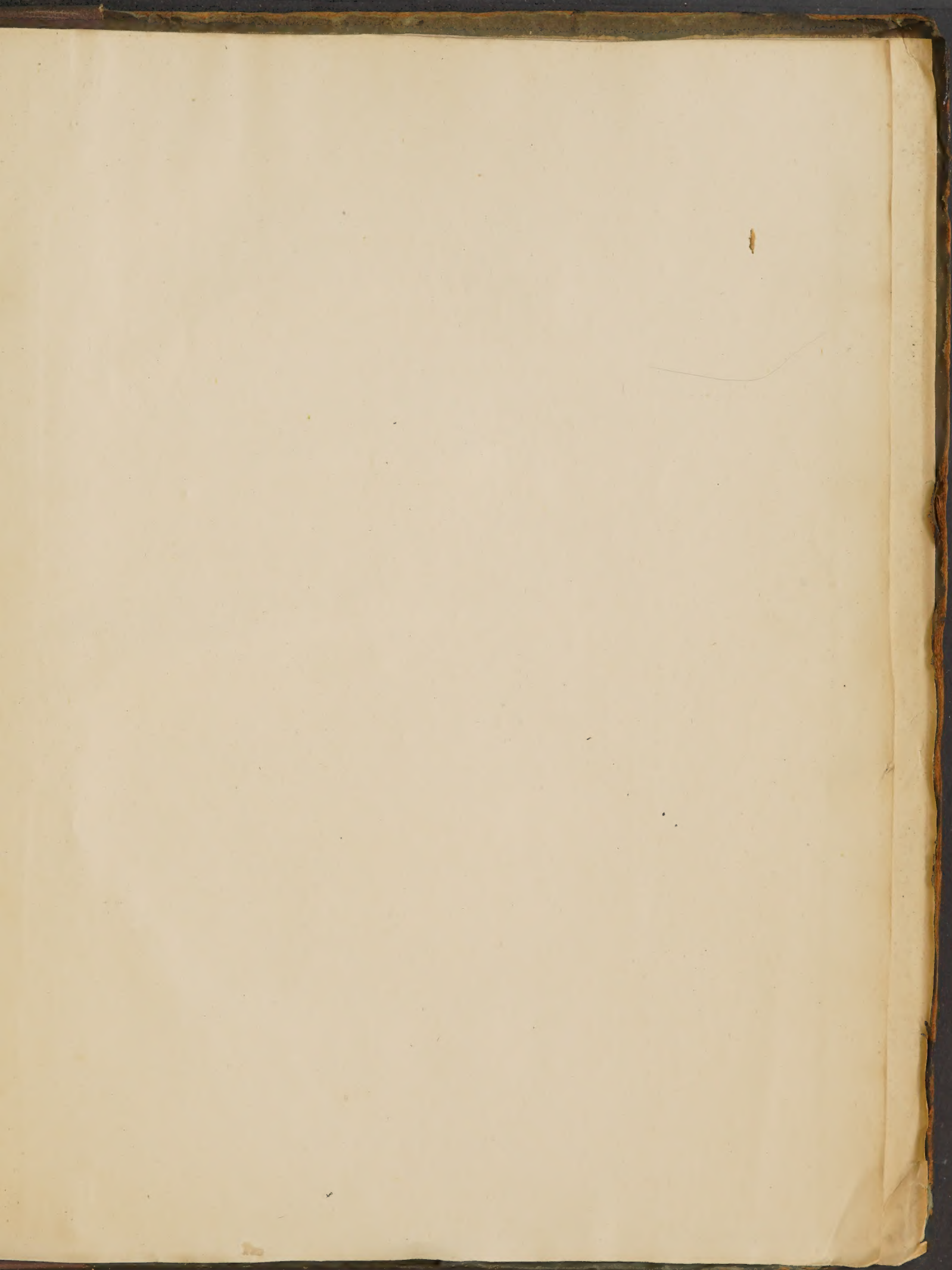
T. A.

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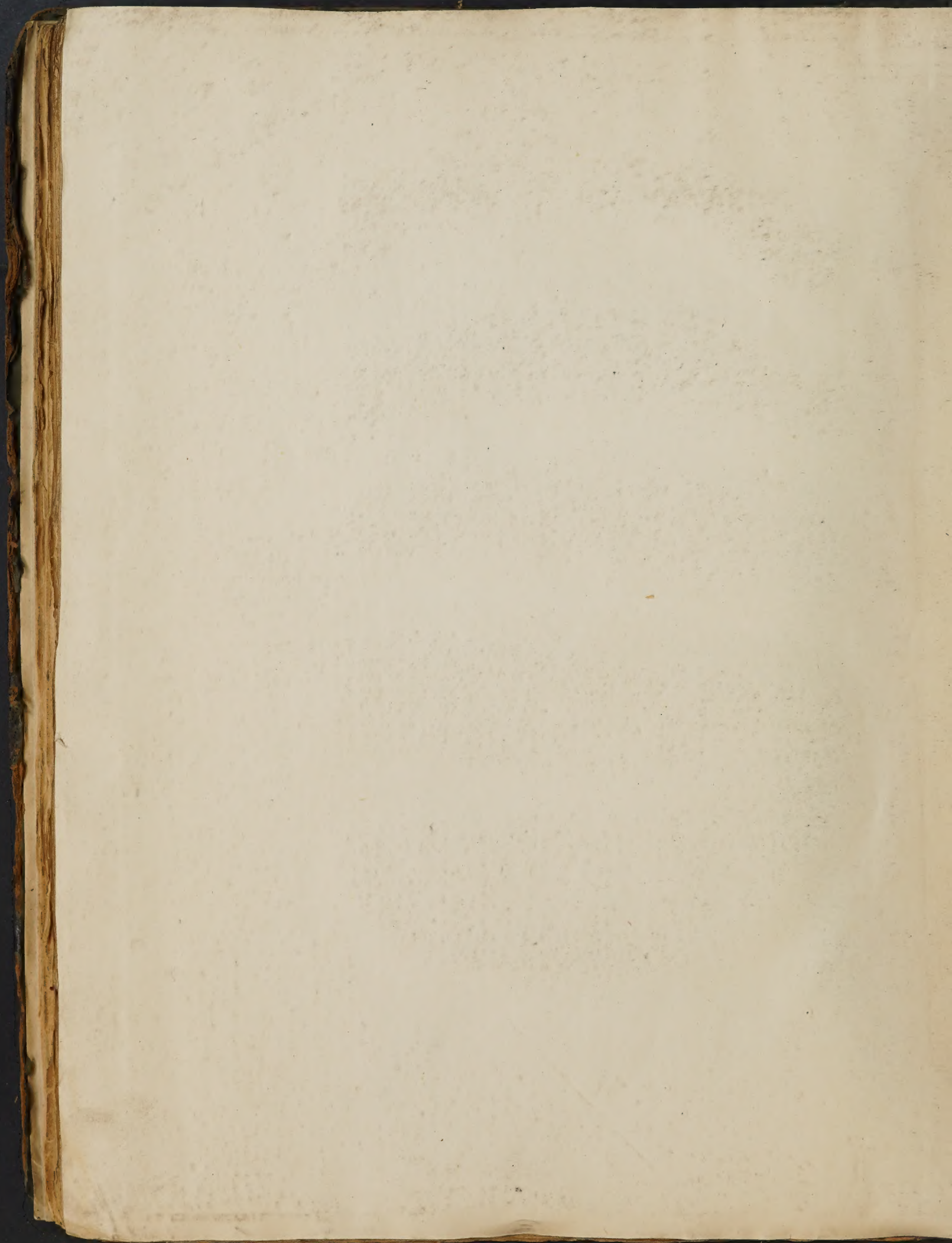
*DIRECTIONS FOR PLACING THE PLATES.*

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